

BRAINERD PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, August 14, 2013

6:00 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers

1. Call to Order
2. Approval/Amendment of Agenda
3. Approval of minutes of the regular meeting of July 10, 2013
4. NEW BUSINESS

NONE
5. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Whittier Property Zoning Ordinance Amendment Process
 - b. Small House and Infill Updates
6. Commissioners' Questions/Comments
7. City Planner Report
8. Adjournment

Any individual needing special accommodations please call 218/828-2309

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PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 10, 2013

Chairman Mike Jay called the meeting of the Brainerd Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Noted present were Commissioners Pritschet, Plantenberg, Hayden, Jay, Lambert, Norwood, and Cole. Also present was City Planner Ostgarden.

Commissioner Jay stated there will be an amendment to the agenda adding item 4c an interpretation request on residential uses within the B-3 (Central Business) District

#2 Approval/Amendment of Agenda

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND PRITSCHET, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

#3 Approve minutes of the regular meeting and workshop of June 12, 2013

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND NORWOOD, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING AND WORKSHOP OF JUNE 12, 2013.

#4 NEW BUSINESS

a. **Public Hearing – Variance at 1423 South 10th Street – Misty Bayliss**

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:02 p.m.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the property is located on the corner of South 10th Street and Summit Street. Summit Street ends at the end of the Bayliss property and cannot be extended as there is a house located at the end of the street. The lot is 75' x 144' and is located in an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District and noted the land to the north and east of the property is vacant. He stated the property owner desires to construct a detached garage in the front of the house which is the front of the lot adjacent to South 10th Street. The Zoning Ordinance specifies that a detached garage cannot be placed in front of the principal building in a residential district and the narrow portion of the property is always considered the front yard. The property owner has requested a variance to construct the detached garage with a separation of six (6) feet from the principal building.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the six (6) feet of separation will give the impression that the garage is attached to the principal structure. The other setback requirements and lot coverage are being met. He stated the garage is 884 square feet and is comparable to other garages in the neighborhood. The location of the house eliminates the location of a garage anywhere else other than to the west of the principal structure. He stated this will not alter the character of the neighborhood based on the garage size and roof pitch. By permitting this variance we are encouraging compatible infill residential development throughout the developed portions of the city to encourage the efficient use of the land.

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City Planner Ostgarden stated from the Planning Department's perspective based on the provided information there is merit to granting the variance

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:09 p.m.

Commissioner Plantenberg read the findings-of-fact into the record as follows: 1. The property is located in an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District; 2. The property is a corner lot with a lot size of 75' x 144' (10,800) sf; 3. The garage will be located six (6) feet from the house giving an impression the garage is attached to the house; 4. Access to the garage will be off the Summit Street cul-de-sac; 5. All setbacks, lot coverage and garage size limit requirements are met; 6. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner because the eight hundred eighty-four (884) sf garage is a typical garage size and comparable in size to other garages in the neighborhood; 7. There are practical difficulties in meeting Zoning Ordinance requirements because the house location does not permit a garage anywhere but in front of the dwelling; 8. The variance will not alter the essential neighborhood character because the house across the street has a detached garage. The garage size and roof pitch will be compatible with the size and pitch of other garages in the neighborhood; 9. Granting the variance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because it supports the Land Use Strategy of: *encourage compatible infill residential development throughout the developed portions of the city, to encourage the efficient use of land, the establishment of a strong tax base and the cost effective provision of city services.*

The Commission added: 10. No public comment (written or verbal) was received.

The Commission agreed to amended finding-of-fact 3 to remove "giving an impression the garage is attached to the house".

The Commission agreed this is the only logical location for the garage, it meets all setback requirements, and it will conform to the neighborhood.

Discussion was held regarding a siding break or landscaping.

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND COLE TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF VARIANCE 379 TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION OF A DETACHED GARAGE WITH A REQUIRED SIDING BREAK OR LANDSCAPING ON THE SOUTH 10TH STREET SIDE IN THE FRONT YARD WITH THE TEN (10) FINDINGS-OF-FACT. COMMISSIONERS PRITSCHET, PLANTENBERG, HAYDEN, NORWOOD, AND COLE.

Commissioner Jay clarified a siding break would be a change in material and style at approximately three feet high.

Commissioner Hayden stated if we required the siding break it would not match the house as it does not have a siding break.

Commissioner Cole stated he is not comfortable with a siding break requirement. He stated he feels a window or landscaping would be a better option.

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MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS PRITSCHET AND PLANTENBERG, DULY CARRIED, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF VARIANCE 379 TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION OF A DETACHED GARAGE IN THE FRONT YARD WITH THE TEN (10) FINDINGS-OF-FACT.

b. Public Hearing – Rezoning South End of 19th Street from R-3 (High Density Residential) District to R-1 (Single Family Residential) District

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:27 p.m.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the majority of the property proposed to be rezoned is wetland and undevelopable. He noted there is approximately 25 acres in this proposal with most of the area being vacant. He stated the parcel on the east side of 19th St SE was split into four lots with one being developed.

City Planner Ostgarden stated one of the significant issues with having the R-3 zoning at the end of 19th Street is that it is a dead end street with no future extension due to the wetlands. He stated development of the R-3 area would create additional traffic moving north through the single family neighborhood.

City Planner Ostgarden reviewed the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Goals as it pertains to the rezoning. He stated the Planning Department recommends the rezoning based on:

- 19th Street being a dead end
- A street extension being of low probability due to wetlands to the south
- The shallow depth of the sanitary sewer making extension difficult
- The Future Land Use Map identifies the land as Low Density Residential land use. Rezoning the property from an R-3 (Multiple Family Residential) District to an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District is recommended.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:33 p.m.

Commissioner Plantenberg read the findings-of-fact into the record as follows: 1. The property is approximately twenty-five (25) acres, the majority of which is wetland; 2. The area for rezoning is at the end of 19th Street SE which is a dead end street; 3. 19th Street SE provides access to an area of single family dwellings and is the only outlet. The R-3 zoning would generate more traffic through the neighborhood than would R-1 zoning; 4. The potential for a 19th Street SE extension is very unlikely due to the wetlands to the south; 5. A portion of the area was split into four (4) large lots that, due to the high water table in the area, would make multiple family development very difficult; 6. The area is identified as Low Density Residential on the Future Land Use Map. Rezoning is in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan because: *Land Use Goal #1: Support the efficient and orderly growth of all urban development, including residential, commercial and industrial areas. Strengthen the distinction between the urban city and the rural countryside with well-planned and carefully coordinated services appropriate to the distinct needs of each. Strategy – identify areas of significant natural resource benefit and protect these area from premature or incompatible development. Land Use Goal #3: Plan for the orderly, efficient and fiscally responsible growth of residential development in Brainerd.*

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Strategies – 1. Only place high-density developments in areas with adequate transportation infrastructure. 2. Encourage development of low density and high density family housing units in those areas designated on the adopted Land Use Plan.

The Commission added: 7. No public comment (written or verbal) was received. 8. R-3 zoning will prevent the construction of single family dwellings in this area.

City Planner Ostgarden stated in the R-3 District we do not allow single family uses, therefore those four lots that were split intended for single family dwellings could not have the single family dwellings.

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND PLANTENBERG, DULY CARRIED, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE REZONING OF THE FOLLOWING PARCELS AT THE SOUTH END OF 19TH STREET SE FROM R-3 (HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) DISTRICT TO AN R-1 (SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL) DISTRICT BASED ON THE EIGHT (8) FINDINGS-OF-FACT:

- PID #09145000011A009
- PID #09145000011B009
- PID #09145000011C009
- PID #09145000011D009
- PID #09145000016Z009
- PID #091450000150009

c. Interpretation Request – Residential Uses in the B-3 (Central Business) District

City Planner Ostgarden stated this is regarding the property on the corner of Maple Street and South 9th Street owned by Mike Murphy. He noted this is the property at which a conditional use permit was granted for a daycare a few months ago. He stated on the property is the daycare building and on the east side of the property is a dwelling, being used as a duplex, all on the same parcel. The property is located in a B-3 (Central Business) District. He stated in the entire B-3 District there are three residential dwellings and are near this parcel.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the dwelling has a problem with the basement that needs to be repaired possibly a whole new basement. He stated because he is doing that, he is interested in adding an additional unit making the dwelling a triplex. In the B-3 District, residential uses are permitted only above the first floor of buildings. He stated the intent of that was for the downtown area.

City Planner Ostgarden stated single family and multiple family dwellings are not allowed in the B-3 District therefore this is already a nonconforming use and you cannot expand a nonconforming use. He stated the question is whether or not the plan to add an additional unit is in violation of the intent of what is specified in the B-3 District for residential uses.

Commissioner Pritschet asked if there is non-residential in the building. He reviewed the language and questioned how it applied.

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City Planner Ostgarden stated it is the only language that can apply. It still is a nonconforming use regardless of the non-residential and residential use in the same building.

It was noted the property directly to the south is zoned R-3. It was also noted during the city wide zoning map review it was requested by the property owner to have the property zoned B-3.

Discussion was held regarding whether or not this is an expansion.

The Commission agreed the interpretation would be to not allow the expansion to a triplex in the B-3 district.

City Planner Ostgarden stated split zoning could be done on the property with residential zoning in the front and the B-3 zoning in the back of the property. He stated for now it can continue as it is, but this will delay Mr. Murphy's plans as he needs to get the basement repair done. He will need to know what can be done with the basement prior to doing the repairs. He stated a rezoning could possibly be done by mid-September.

#5 OLD BUSINESS

a. City Council Strategic Planning Update

Commissioner Pritschet stated the Council is looking at implementing the plan at this time and presentations have been done.

#6 Commissioners' Questions/Comments

Commissioner Jay stated the Planning Commission agendas will now be published in the Dispatch.

Commissioner Plantenberg asked if the Commission could initiate the rezoning process for the property at 402 South 9th Street.

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PLANTENBERG AND PRITSCHET, DULY CARRIED, TO BEGIN THE REZONING PROCESS FOR 402 SOUTH 9TH STREET TO A SPLIT ZONING WITH R-3 (HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) DISTRICT ON WEST SIDE OF THE PROPERTY AND B-3 (CENTRAL BUSINESS) DISTRICT ZONING ON THE EAST SIDE CONTINGENT UPON THE PROPERTY OWNERS APPROVAL.

Commissioner Pritschet stated there was a walkabout for the Safe Routes to School sidewalk project in NE Brainerd on Monday night. He stated the entire route was walked and many questions from property owners were answered about potential problems and benefits. The trees were looked at to see what ones will need to be removed and there will be little impact to the trees. He stated there were property owners that were for the project and also some against it.

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#7 City Planner's Comments

City Planner Ostgarden stated the Buffalo Hills trail project is moving along well and paving could be starting next week. There has been a small issue with the area between South 6th Street and old spur line section in front of SAVE Foods. He stated there is an ATV trail that the City was unaware of on the north side of CR 117 that we will have to figure out a way to accommodate. We cannot have our trail and the ATV trail be the same according to the DNR.

#8 Adjournment

As there was no further business the meeting adjourned to the workshop at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner

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**Brainerd Planning Commission Workshop
July 10, 2013**

Chairman Mike Jay called the meeting of the Brainerd Planning Commission to order at 7:28 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers.

Present: Dave Pritschet, Angie Plantenberg, Sarah Hayden, Mike Jay, Jan Lambert, and James Norwood.

Others Present: City Planner Mark Ostgarden

The purpose of the workshop is to receive a presentation from Northern Pines regarding the use of Whittier School and to have discussion on small lot/house construction and residential infill design guidelines.

Mr. Glenn Anderson, Northern Pines Mental Health Center, provided information about Northern Pines and what services they provide. He reviewed their current locations and operations. He stated they want to be more than just an organization that provides a whole range of professional services but be part of the community and provide services for the whole community, not just individuals and families, through community education.

Mr. Anderson stated he has had conversations with The Center and their possible use of the Whittier building. He stated they do not have the budget to take on a project of owning and operating the building. He stated The Center's mission overlaps Northern Pines mission.

Ms. DeAnn Berry, The Center, provided information about The Center and what services they provide along with uses within their building. She stated they have run out of space in their current facility and they do not have room for expansion. She stated Whittier is a couple blocks away and would provide the space for other programs they currently have offsite and new programs. She stated there are a lot of things The Center can collaborate on with Northern Pines.

Mr. Steve Lund, ISD #181, reviewed the process the School Board Task Force went through in choosing an organization for the Whittier repurposing project.

Mr. Anderson stated they would like to duplicate a community center, providing a location where services can be made available for the community. He stated they will have office space for Northern Pines staff along with a preschool/daycare program. He reviewed how other areas of the building will be used.

Commissioner Cole asked if they plan to consolidate all their other facilities and what do they plan to use for parking. Mr. Anderson stated the office space will be used for personnel who go into homes and work with families and children. He stated they will not be opening an outpatient service. He stated there is enough off street parking on the site to serve the square footage of office space they plan to utilize in the building.

Commissioner Lambert asked if The Center will be using office space. Ms. Berry stated maybe for volunteers, but there will not be additional staff.

Commissioner Lambert asked about hours of operation. Mr. Anderson stated he would like to see some type of community activity going on all the time. He stated they want to maximize the use of the space. It will be operated similar to how it was when it was a school.

Commissioner Lambert asked about parking for activities in the gymnasium. Ms. Berry stated it will not be any different than when it operated as a school.

Commissioner Hayden asked about the grounds around the school. Mr. Anderson stated there may be a greenhouse and possibly a community garden with walking paths that is more like a park setting.

Commissioner Plantenberg asked for more specifics on how Northern Pines will be utilizing the building. Mr. Anderson stated there are many uses they could transfer to the building. He stated the one he felt would be the most compatible and least controversial would be office space. He stated they already have a clinic and if they need more space they will add on to the clinic.

Commissioner Jay asked if the playground equipment will be left there. Mr. Anderson stated it will be taken down and a community garden will be put there. He stated they do not want to have the responsibility and liability of having equipment that will be utilized by the neighborhood.

Commissioner Jay asked about retail uses in the building. Mr. Anderson stated it is a possibility but will be done more as a social setting than to make money.

Commissioner Norwood stated he has concerns with rezoning and what future uses will be when Northern Pines is gone. Mr. Anderson stated that was exactly why they didn't want to go with a rezoning but would rather use the conditional use permit process so the uses can be specific and conditions can be placed on the use, but there is not a conditional use within the R-1 zone that will fit their needs. He stated it will give the City the control over what uses go on in the building.

Mr. Anderson stated they are flexible as to what can go in there. They want to utilize the building for what is best for the community and will work with the Commission on what can be done. He stated this is not going to be set up as a place you go to see your therapist.

Commissioner Hayden asked if the walking paths and gardens will be open to the public. Mr. Anderson stated it will, but it will not be a public park. You will have to go through the building to get to the garden, the area will be fenced.

The Commission listened to public comments and concerns.

- Location within an R-1 zone
- Parking and traffic
- Removal of the playground
- People smoking outside
- Block should be used for residential use
- Good idea – opportunity for the community to use something
- Conditional Use Permit will allow the Commission to regulate uses

Mr. Anderson addressed some of the concerns. He stated there will be additional traffic, but we need to think about how the building will be used and getting the neighborhood to use the building.

Discussion was held on a timeline for the project. It was noted there is no specific timeline, everyone wants to work with the community and find the best use for the building.

The Commission held discussion on small lot/house construction and residential infill design guidelines. City Planner Ostgarden provided a lot of information to the Commission. Most small homes become more of a planned unit development versus infill.

Discussion on small homes involved:

- Making provisions as a planned unit development
- Making provisions as infill within R-1, R-2, R-MH districts
- Specify areas in the city for small house development
- Building Code requirements

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner

MEMO

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner 

DATE: August 7, 2013

RE: Whittier Property Repurposing – Zoning Ordinance Amendment Process

Process Background

The July 12, 2013 workshop with Glen Anderson from Northern Pines Mental Health Center and DeAnn Berry from The Center provided the Planning Commission with background information about both organizations and their desires to use the Whittier property. Subsequent to that meeting as explained in the July 30th e-mail, the Planning Commission Chairman requested that members be polled to see if there is consensus about which Zoning Ordinance amendment process should be followed to consider adding “community center.” As of the date of this memo four (4) Commissioners responded supporting a Conditional Use Permit process and one (1) Commissioner is supportive of rezoning.

“Community Center” Definition

Before a review of adding the use to the Zoning Ordinance it is suggested that the Planning Commission discuss the definition of “community center”. Mr. Anderson and Ms. Barry articulated ideas to the Planning Commission about their vision or idea of a community center and each Planning Commissioner most likely has a vision or idea of a “community center,” however the types of allowed activities may vary. To assist in the discussions about a “community center” definition, the Planning Department has compiled the following list of “community center” definitions to review:

1. *A building used for recreational, social, educational, or cultural activities, usually owned and operated by a public or nonprofit group or agency.*
2. *A multi-purpose meeting and recreational facility typically consisting of one or more meeting or multi-purpose rooms, kitchen and/or outdoor barbecue facilities, that are available for use by various groups for such activities as meetings, parties, receptions, dances, etc.*
3. *A facility maintained by a public agency or by a not-for-profit community or neighborhood association primarily for social, recreational, or educational needs of the community or neighborhood.*

4. *A place, which may include a building, complex of buildings, indoor or outdoor athletic fields, or combination thereof, that provides for cultural, recreational, athletic, or entertainment activities owned and/or operated by a governmental agency or private non-profit agency.*
5. *A building to be used as a place of meeting, recreation or social activity and not operated for profit and in which neither alcoholic beverages nor meals are normally dispensed or consumed.*
6. *An establishment operated by a non-profit organization or government agency primarily devoted to educational, recreational and cultural facilities, displays, meeting rooms, social service facilities and public health facilities, or any combination thereof.*

The Planning Department's suggestion is that the 1st definition with some modification would seem to address the "community center" definition:

A building OR BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATED PROPERTY usually owned and operated by a public AND/ or nonprofit group or agency used for public and/or nonprofit group offices and ANY COMBINATION OF recreational, social, educational, or cultural activities.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment

As stated earlier in this report the Planning Commission consensus is to add "community center" to the list of permitted residential district conditional uses. Following is the list permitted in the R-1 (Single Family Residential) District with "community center" added to the list.

515-54-5: Conditional Uses.

- A. *Off-premise surface parking lots and parking ramps subject to provisions of Section 22 of this Ordinance.*
- B. *Bed and breakfast subject to provisions of Section 31 of this Ordinance.*
- C. *Non-profit and not-for-profit offices located in buildings owned by the Brainerd Independent School District, not used for classroom education and subject to the following minimum requirements:*
 1. *One (1) off-street parking space for each three hundred (300) square feet of office space.*
 2. *No individual exterior entrances.*
 3. *Business hours are limited from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.*

4. *No exterior business signs.*
- D. *Planned Unit Developments as regulated by Section 11 of this Ordinance.*
- E. *Government and public regulated utility buildings and structures necessary for the health, safety and general welfare of the community provided that when abutting a residential use in a residential use district, the property is screened and landscaped in accordance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.*
- F. *Public and private schools provided that:*
1. *The site accesses a major collector.*
 2. *The site is landscaped in accordance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.*
 3. *Off-street parking is provided in accordance with Section 22 of this Ordinance.*
 4. *Off-street loading and service entrances are provided as regulated by Section 23 of this Ordinance.*
 5. *Emergency vehicle access is provided to and within the site.*
- G. *Hospitals provided that:*
1. *Side yards are double the minimum requirements established for this district and are screened in compliance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.*
 2. *The site shall be served by an arterial or collector street of sufficient capacity to accommodate traffic which will be generated.*
 3. *All State Statutes and regulations governing such use are strictly adhered to and all required operating permits are secured.*
- H. *Places of worship and related buildings provided that:*
1. *Side yards shall be thirty (30) feet.*
 2. *Adequate screening from abutting residential uses and landscaping is provided in compliance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.*

3. *Adequate off-street parking and access is provided on the site or on lots directly abutting or directly across a public street or alley to the principal use in compliance with Section 22 of this Ordinance and that such parking is adequately screened and landscaped from surrounding and abutting residential uses in compliance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.*
4. *Adequate off-street loading and service entrances are provided and regulated where applicable by Section 23 of this Ordinance.*

I. COMMUNITY CENTERS.

Unlike C above which limits the conditional use to “Non-profit and not-for-profit offices located in buildings owned by the Brainerd Independent School District” adding “community center” provides an alternate use for residential district buildings that might be obsolete or non-conforming in nature. Examples include churches and buildings once used for nonresidential purposes located in residential districts in the city.

Possible community center activities include:

1. Multi-purpose public spaces for Community Center activities and programs, such as classrooms for a learning center, a gymnasium and stage for exercise, recreation and live performances, community dining, youth, adult and senior drop in activities, and gathering spaces for civic engagement and socialization.
2. Private office space for Center employees.
3. Day care or early childhood educational programs for pre-school age children.
4. Other services that address community or neighborhood needs.

Conditional Use Permit Review Criteria

Adding the “community center” definition to the Zoning Ordinance list of defined uses and adding “community center” to the list of permitted conditional uses in residential districts will permit North Pines Mental Health, Inc. and The Center to apply for a conditional use permit specifically for the Whittier property. The Zoning Ordinance lists the types of findings the Planning Commission and City Council should consider when evaluating a conditional use permit application:

Criteria for Granting Conditional Use Permits.

In granting a Conditional Use Permit, the City Council shall consider the advice and recommendations of the Planning Commission and the effect of the proposed use upon the health, safety, morals and general welfare of occupants or surrounding lands. Among other things, the City Council shall make the following findings where applicable.

1. *The proposed use conforms to the district and conditional use provisions and all general regulations of this Ordinance.*
2. *The proposed use meets all special standards which may apply to its class of conditional uses as set forth in this section.*
3. *The proposed use shall not involve any element or cause any condition that may be dangerous, injurious, or noxious to any other property or persons.*
4. *The proposed use shall be sited, oriented and landscaped to produce a harmonious relationship of buildings and grounds to adjacent buildings and properties.*
5. *The proposed use shall produce a total visual impression and environment which is consistent with the environment of the neighborhood.*
6. *The proposed use shall organize vehicular access and parking to minimize traffic congestion in the neighborhood.*
7. *The proposed use shall preserve the objectives of this Ordinance and shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*

Note that words such as “harmonious” and the phrase “.... consistent with the environment...” relate to findings that can be considered subjective in nature.

Should the Zoning Ordinance changes be approved and Northern Pines and The Center apply for a “community center” Conditional Use Permit at the Whittier property, the Zoning Ordinance lists the following information submittal requirements:

Information Requirement.

- A. *The person applying for a Conditional Use Permit for a single family or two-family property shall fill out and submit to the Zoning Administrator a Conditional Use Permit application form and required filing fee. This form shall contain, but not be limited to, the following data unless waived by the Zoning Administrator:*
 1. *Detailed legal description of the property.*
 2. *Site plan showing location of all buildings and structures with dimensions and setbacks.*

3. *Planting plan showing pathway system, width and material, screening fences with detail, lighting system, recreational feature, if any.*
4. *Landscape plan showing location, species and size of all plant material.*
5. *Drainage plan indicating catch basins and underground improvement.*
6. *Utility systems for sanitary sewer, water, gas, telephone and electric which shall all be underground for new construction.*
7. *Sites adjacent to MnDOT right-of-way shall identify the right-of-way location, dimension from the centerline of the highway to the MnDOT right-of-way line, along with existing and proposed ingress and egress.*
8. *Sites adjacent to MnDOT right-of-way shall be submitted to MnDOT for review and comment.*
9. *Off-street parking, driveways and access plan.*
10. *Off-street loading plan, if any, is necessary.*
11. *Plan for adjustment to existing rights-of-way, easements, utilities and new dedications.*
12. *Architectural plans showing elevations, entrances, heights, floor plans and material to be used on the exterior.*
13. *Plans in triplicate drawn to scale showing the nature, location, dimensions, and elevation of the lot, existing or proposed structures, fill, storage of materials, flood-proofing measures, and the relationship of the above to the location of the stream channel. Specifications for building construction and materials, flood proofing, filling, dredging, grading, channel improvement, storage of materials, water supply and sanitary facilities.*

B. The person applying for a Conditional Use Permit within a commercial or industrial district and for all townhome and multiple family properties shall fill out and submit to the Zoning Administrator a Conditional Use Permit application form and required filing fee. This form shall contain, but not be limited to, the following data:

1. *Certificate of Survey prepared by a licensed land surveyor identifying the following:*

- a. *Scale (engineering only) at one (1) inch equals one hundred (100) feet or less.*
 - b. *North point indication.*
 - c. *Existing boundaries with lot dimension and lot area.*
 - d. *Existing buildings, structures and improvements.*
 - e. *Easements of record.*
 - f. *Delineated wetland boundary, to include the OHWL of any lakes or DNR waters.*
 - g. *All encroachments.*
 - h. *Legal description.*
2. *Site Plan using the current Certificate of Survey as a base depicting the following:*
- a. *Name of project or development.*
 - b. *Name and address of developer and/or owner.*
 - c. *Name and address of engineer, architect or designer.*
 - d. *Date of plan preparation and dates of any subsequent revisions.*
 - e. *All proposed improvements, including:*
 - 1) *Required and proposed setbacks.*
 - 2) *Location, setback and dimensions of all proposed buildings and structures.*
 - 3) *Location of all adjacent buildings and structures within one hundred (100) feet of the exterior boundaries of the subject property.*
 - 4) *Location, number, dimensions of all proposed parking stalls, loading areas and drive aisles, with curbing shown.*

- 5) *Location and width of all proposed street accesses and driveways.*
 - 6) *Location and type of all proposed lighting, including fixture details.*
 - 7) *Provisions for storage and disposal of waste, garbage and recyclables, including details for enclosing and screening exterior containers.*
 - 8) *Location of freestanding signs.*
 - 9) *Location of HVAC equipment whether ground mounted or roof mounted.*
3. *Grading Plan (using the current Certificate of Survey as a base) depicting the following:*
- a. *Existing contours at two (2) foot intervals.*
 - b. *Proposed grade elevations at two (2) foot maximum intervals.*
 - c. *Drainage plan, including the configuration of drainage areas and calculations.*
 - d. *Spot elevations.*
 - e. *Surface water ponding and treatment areas.*
 - f. *Erosion control measures.*
 - g. *Wetland replacement plan (when applicable).*
 - h. *Drainage calculations for 2, 10, and 100 year storm events.*
 - i. *Delineated wetland boundary, to include OHWL of any lakes or DNR waters.*
 - j. *Date of plan preparation and dates of any subsequent revisions.*
4. *Landscaping Plan using the current Certificate of Survey as a base depicting the following:*

- a. *Planting schedule including symbols, quantities, common and botanical names, sizes of plant materials, root specification (bare root, balled/burlapped, potted, etc.) and special installation instructions.*
 - b. *Location, type and size of all significant trees to be removed or preserved.*
 - c. *Location and species of proposed plantings of all species.*
 - d. *Typical sections with details of fences, walls, and planter boxes.*
 - e. *Typical sections with details of landscape islands, planter beds, and foundation plantings with identification of materials to be used.*
 - f. *Delineation of both sodded and seeded areas with respective areas measured in square feet.*
 - g. *Coverage plan for underground irrigation systems, if any.*
 - h. *Other existing or proposed conditions that could be anticipated to affect landscaping.*
 - i. *Date of plan preparation and dates of any subsequent revisions.*
5. *Photometric Lighting Plan, in accordance with Section 18, to include fixture details/cut sheets/drawings and date of plan preparation and dates of any subsequent revisions.*
6. *Architectural Plans including:*
- a. *Date of plan preparation and dates of any subsequent revisions.*
 - b. *Architectural elevations of all principal and accessory buildings and structures showing entrances, heights, floor plans, and exterior materials.*
 - c. *Typical floor plans and typical room plans drawn to scale with a summary of square footage by use or activity.*
 - d. *Plans for building additions shall identify existing and proposed elevations.*

7. *Utility Plan, including:*

- a. Location, sizing, and type of water and sewer system mains, storm sewer and proposed service connections, hydrants, valves, and manholes.*
- b. Location and size of proposed primary and secondary on-site treatment systems, when allowed (if proposed).*
- c. Date of plan preparations and dates of any subsequent revisions.*
- d. Estimates of forecasted water consumption.*
- e. Location of electrical services and any transformers and meters.*

- B. One copy of the information described in the above shall be transmitted to a designated engineer or other expert person or agency for technical assistance, where necessary, in evaluating the proposed project in relation to flood heights and velocities, the seriousness of flood damage to the use, the adequacy of the plans for protection, and other technical matters.*
- C. Based upon the technical evaluation of the designated engineer or expert, the City shall determine the specific flood hazard at the site and evaluate the suitability of the proposed use in relation to the flood hazard.*

Note the underlined sections in A and B above. An application for a community center does not fit neatly into either the above single family or two-family property proposal or the commercial or industrial district and for all townhome and multiple family properties proposal. The Planning Commission should determine which submittal requirements will be required to be followed.

Current Zoning Ordinance Language

The repurposing process initiated by the School District has been based on its interest to no longer own the Whittier facility. All discussion between the School District, Northern Pines, the Center, the community and the City of Brainerd has been based on Northern Pines seeking approval for repurposing the Whittier property as a "community center" and purchasing the property from the School District.

Item 515: Conditional Uses C reads on page three (3) above reads:

Non-profit and not-for-profit community centers located in school district buildings and/or on property no longer owned by the school district and subject to the following minimum requirements:

- 1. No individual exterior entrances.*

2. *Business hours are limited from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.*
3. *One (1) exterior sign either free standing or on the building*

The Planning Department would like to make the significance of this language clear should an unlikely scenario occur. Should the School District for whatever reason continue to own the Whittier property, the above language permits it to lease the property to any number of nonprofit or not for profits for offices. Examples could be the offices of Kinship Partners, the United Way, Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation, Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity and/or Northern Pines Mental Health Center, Inc.

Next Steps

Should the Planning Commission agree on a “community center” definition and possible Zoning Ordinance amendment language to add this use as a conditional use in residential districts, a public hearing could be scheduled for the September 11, 2013 Planning Commission meeting. The City Council could receive the recommendation and consider a 1st Ordinance reading to amend the Zoning Ordinance on September 16, 2013. Should there be no modifications or desired changes it could conduct the public hearing and consider a 2nd Ordinance reading on October 7, 2013.

Should the Zoning Ordinance be amended, Northern Pines and The Center could apply for a conditional use permit hearing for the November 13, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

Information From Other Communities

The Planning Department has inquired of several communities whether they have had school closing experiences and if so has there been any property repurposing. Attached is e-mail from:

- Fergus Falls
- Mankato
- Willmar
- Alexandria
- Red Wing (Includes staff report excerpt)

Mark Ostgarden

From: Gordon.Hydukovich@ci.fergus-falls.mn.us
Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 1:51 PM
To: Mark Ostgarden
Subject: Re: Closing Residential Neighborhood Schools

Mark,

We had a elementary school (Eisenhower) closed a number of years ago. It was bought by a religious organization for nursing home offices, hospice care offices, and later development of a thirty-two bed assisted living facility. Our city Code has allowed the location of a not for profit in an old school built before a certain date. The grounds are in a multiple zone.

Gordon A. Hydukovich
PO Box 868, City Hall
112 Washington Avenue West
Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56538-0868
Business Phone - 218 - 332 - 5427
FAX - 218 - 332 - 5449

Mark Ostgarden
<mostgarden@ci.fergus-falls.mn.us>
To
"gordon.hydukovich@ci.fergus-falls.mn.us"
07/17/2013 12:45 PM
<gordon.hydukovich@ci.fergus-falls.mn.us>,
cc
Subject
Closing Residential Neighborhood Schools

Hi Gordon. I'm curious if you have had any neighborhood school closings and building repurposing? If so what process was used to repurpose the property? Our school district is closing one right in the middle of one of our neighborhoods and it is going to be repurposed as a nonprofit community center.

Mark Ostgarden

From: Noerenberg, Jon <jnoerenberg@city.mankato.mn.us>
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 1:48 PM
To: Mark Ostgarden
Subject: RE: Closing Neighborhood Elementary Schools

Good afternoon Mark,

I'm aware of only one such building in Mankato, which is the Lincoln Community Center. This was formerly a junior high school that was repurposed in 1982 to serve as a Community Center. It was, and is, owned by the school district, and also serves as a school capacity for an alternative high school (Central High) for the district. In reviewing our files it doesn't appear there were any special approvals sought or required, but I assume this was due to the fact that it continued to operate in a school capacity (albeit reduced), and it was still owned by the school district, with schools being a permitted use in the residential districts. This setup has worked very well and the Lincoln Community Center has become an integral part of the neighborhood and the community. In this instance it's great that it was able to be repurposed since it is a large, historic building and takes up the better part of a block with its hillside location – had it been removed, it would surely be missed.

If we were to receive a similar request today from a private owner or developer, we would first review their proposal at a staff level to see if it was something that would be in line with the surrounding neighborhood. We would request a narrative of their proposal and a set of preliminary plans, if they have them available. For a residential area we would also likely facilitate an informal neighborhood meeting to gather feedback before the proposal went any further. Assuming no major issues are encountered during the first two steps, we would closely review it as a conditional use permit and run it through that process with the Planning Commission and City Council. We have a clause to consider the following as conditional uses in residential districts:

A. Other residential, institutional, or government service uses determined by the Planning Agency to be of the same general character as the permitted and conditional uses above and found not to be detrimental to existing uses and the general public health, safety, and welfare.

While we have not had requests to convert former school buildings to a community center use, we have had several concepts for community/youth center-type operations, both for and non-profit, to locate in various commercial areas. Thus far none have come to fruition, due to items as below. However, if we were able to work through these, we would utilize the same conditional use permit process as above.

- Various uses combined into a single building (dancing, games, food service, etc.) become complicated for building code compliance, zoning classification, meeting parking demands. The multiple uses are often pursued to make the center more appealing to users as well as a way to help cash-flow it a bit through food sales and games, but they quickly become overwhelming to meet all applicable requirements once they start to be combined.
- One proposed youth center, located on the border of our downtown bar area, wanted hours that were seen as likely for conflicts with 21+ bar goers in the area, and they were unwilling to compromise.
- General inexperience of interested parties. Though well-meaning, many were not expecting the extent of the process, including going through review and approvals, having professional plans done, and particularly changes needed to meet building code. This is somewhat of a byproduct of the typically low-cost space that has tended to attract their interest in the first place.

Assuming that your applicant has a well thought-out plan and Brainerd's city code has some mechanism to do so, I would recommend going through the conditional use permit process. This will also help prevent any concerns over it being considered a non-conforming use, especially for lenders if a sale of the property ever comes up.

Hopefully you find this information helpful. Please let me know if you have any additional questions or if I can be of further assistance.

Regards,

Jon

Jon Noerenberg
Planning Assistant
City of Mankato
10 Civic Center Plaza
Mankato, MN 56002-3368
Phone: (507) 387-8571
Fax: (507) 388-7530

From: Mark Ostgarden [<mailto:mostgarden@ci.brainerd.mn.us>]

Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 12:44 PM

To: Noerenberg, Jon

Subject: Closing Neighborhood Elementary Schools

Hi Jon. I'm curious if you have had any neighborhood elementary school closings and building repurposing? If so what process was used to repurpose the property? Our school district is closing one right in the middle of one of our neighborhoods and it is going to be repurposed as a nonprofit community center.

Many thanks for whatever information you have and have time to share.

Mark

Mark Ostgarden

From: Megan DeSchepper <mdeschepper@willmarmn.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 2:57 PM
To: Mark Ostgarden
Subject: RE: Closing Neighborhood Elementary Schools

Hi Mark,

We have had three neighborhood schools close in our community. They have all been repurposed. In two cases they were rezoned from G/I (Government/Institutional) to R-2 (One and Two Family Residential) which is what zoning they were surrounded by. One got converted to a daycare which required a conditional use permit, and another became a church which also required a conditional use permit. The third school property was directly abutting commercial areas so was rezoned to LB (Limited Business) and was purchased for record storage and janitorial services for an abutting clinic. So they were rezoned first, and then the uses that they converted too were either permitted outright or with a CUP. Hope this helps. Thanks! Megan

Megan M. DeSchepper, AICP
Planner/Airport Manager
City Office Building
333 6th St. SW
PO Box 755
Willmar, MN 56201

From: Mark Ostgarden [<mailto:mostgarden@ci.brainerd.mn.us>]
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 2:27 PM
To: Megan DeSchepper
Subject: Closing Neighborhood Elementary Schools

Hi Megan. I'm curious if you have had any neighborhood elementary school closings and building repurposing? If so what process was used to repurpose the property? Our school district is closing one right in the middle of one of our neighborhoods and it is going to be repurposed as a nonprofit community center.

Many thanks for whatever information you have and have time to share.

Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner

Mark Ostgarden

From: Karin Tank <ktank@rea-alp.com>
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 3:01 PM
To: Mark Ostgarden
Cc: Mike Weber
Subject: RE: Closing Neighborhood Elementary Schools

Hi Mark-

I know of two schools that were closed and repurposed: Central High/Jr. High School was repurposed into Douglas County facilities (numerous renovations for this location). I don't know when this happened though, many decades ago. More recently, Washington Elementary was closed and converted into Cooperative Housing Units through a PUD process. Mike Weber would be the contact for information about both of these repurposings.

We've also had some old clinics repurposed into office space (WSN & offices/Marion Building) – I am not sure if there would be any helpful info here. Again, these were completed many decades ago. I've cc'd Mike to weigh in.

Thanks!

Karin

From: Mark Ostgarden [<mailto:mostgarden@ci.brainerd.mn.us>]
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 2:28 PM
To: ktank@rea-alp.com
Subject: Closing Neighborhood Elementary Schools

Hi Karin. I'm curious if you have had any neighborhood elementary school closings and building repurposing? If so what process was used to repurpose the property? Our school district is closing one right in the middle of one of our neighborhoods and it is going to be repurposed as a nonprofit community center.

Many thanks for whatever information you have and have time to share.

Mark

Mark Ostgarden

From: Kohn, Steve <steve.kohn@ci.red-wing.mn.us>
Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2013 9:17 AM
To: Mark Ostgarden
Cc: Peterson, Brian
Subject: RE: School Building Repurposing
Attachments: 10 - Agenda Report R-2 Zoning Discussion.pdf

Hi Mark,

Unfortunately, the information you received isn't very accurate. We are currently going through the same issue with a vacant neighborhood elementary school building and several other neighborhood schools and institutional buildings (that are or could be vacant in the near future) which are located in residential districts. Most of these sites are zoned R-2 Residential Two, which is a dense single-family residential district (4-8 units per acre). The R-2 District has very limited uses available and multi-family residential is limited to 4 units per parcel. So far potential developers have shown interest for conversions to housing. We are finding that all of the sites in Red Wing with this issue are unique in setting and that it may be difficult to find a solution that is right for all of these structures and their neighborhoods.

Our Planning Commission is currently studying the subject; it is actually on their agenda tonight. I've attached our most recent staff memo to the Planning Commission on the topic.

Our first choice (staff and the Planning Commission) is to have the schools reused as neighborhood schools, but our school district has gone in another direction and it is very unlikely we will ever see small neighborhood schools (public) again in Red Wing. We also want to see the buildings reused and not demolished if at all possible. Most of the buildings are well constructed, in good general repair, and have decent potential (structurally) for reuse. We also want the new uses to be compatible with the existing neighborhoods.

We did have a successful reuse of our former high school building (constructed in 1916) into 21 high-end condos; however, the site is located in our Central Business (B-3) Zoning District, which includes our historic downtown. The use was permitted with a CUP for Multi-Family Residential (no limit on # of units in this district). The building is located on the southern edge of our historic downtown and is near a residential neighborhood, but is surrounded by the Goodhue County Law Enforcement/Judicial Center, the Goodhue County Government Center, several churches, and Central Park. It was quite a project that took a lot of cooperation from the County (who owned the property), the City, the developer, and the Red Wing Area Fund. We would be willing to discuss this project with you in greater detail, if you are interested.

In summary, it appears Brainerd and Red Wing are struggling with the same issue. Feel free to give Brian Peterson (651-385-3617) or me a call if you have any specific questions or want to further discuss the issue. Also, we would appreciate any information you could share with us regarding your research and process.

Thanks.

Steve Kohn
Assistant Planning Director
City of Red Wing
(651)385-3622
steve.kohn@ci.red-wing.mn.us

From: Mark Ostgarden [<mailto:mostgarden@ci.brainerd.mn.us>]

Sent: Tuesday, June 18, 2013 8:29 AM

To: Kohn, Steve

Subject: School Building Repurposing

Good morning Steve. We have had an elementary school located in a residential neighborhood close and the school district is interested in selling the property. The potential purchaser operates a mental health center and he plans is to repurpose the property (building and grounds) for a community center. During our conversations he referenced Red Wing as a community that has been successful in repurposing closed school buildings in residential areas.

Is he accurate in his statement? I looked through your Zoning Ordinance, but I didn't see a land use category in residential zones that would indicate this might have happened.

Can you give clarify for me if indeed you have been able to repurpose elementary schools? If so how was it accomplished?

Many thanks.

Mark



TO: Red Wing Advisory Planning Commission Members
FROM: 
Brian C. Peterson AICP, Planning Director; 6-14-13
Meeting Date: June 18, 2013

Agenda Item

Item # 10 – R-2 Zoning Discussion

Action Requested

Discuss and Provide Direction to the Planning Department

Attachments

- May 21, 2013 Handout Information

Background

The Planning Commission has been discussing the potential reuse of several larger institutional properties that are currently zoned R-2 that were historically integrated within residential neighborhoods. At the May 21, 2013 meeting, a public meeting was noticed and property owners near the former Hancock School were invited to attend and provide input. Please review the minutes of the May 21, 2013 meeting for a good summary of that discussion. At the end of that meeting, the commission decided to ask the Planning staff to provide some alternatives for further discussion and direction.

Below are some general options that could be considered for further discussion.

Option #1 No Change

Proposal: The Planning Commission could decide to leave the current zoning code as is and not make any changes.

Implications: In general, this would discourage the sale and reuse of these properties for any use other than those currently listed in the R-2 Zoning regulations. It does appear that the list of eligible uses in the R-2 district are rather restrictive and unless a new school use, religious institution, nursing home, or semi-transient accommodation can be found, it is somewhat unlikely that the properties would find another adaptive use. The most likely outcomes in the long term would be that the existing buildings would eventually be demolished and single family or duplex housing constructed; or a developer could propose a reuse that would require rezoning or a zoning text amendment in order to proceed. It is somewhat expensive for a developer to put plans together for a property reuse and then ask for changes in the zoning or zoning text and often this sort of risk discourages developers from making that sort of investment.

Option #2 Change to the list of Conditional Uses

Proposal: The Planning Commission could consider revisions to the R-2 Zoning District Regulations by adding additional uses or revising exiting uses that require a conditional use permit. The following uses could be added to the list of conditional uses:

- Multiple-Family Residential 3—4 Units- 3 – 8 Units Per Acre
- Multiple-Family Residential 3 – 8 Units Per Acre (For Adaptive Reuse of Historic Properties Only)
- Community Services
- Indoor Athletic Facilities
- Indoor Recreation Facilities
- Offices

Implications: The idea behind these changes is that the regulations could be modified to allow for a broader list of potential adaptive reuses. Multiple Family uses could be limited to the adaptive reuse of historic properties so that it does not impact on other smaller sites and encourage new construction. It would also allow the City to review and approve only those projects that have received a public hearing and meet the City's requirements for a conditional use permit. Developers would still have risk involved in getting a conditional use permit approved but this risk would be somewhat reduced if their project is listed as a potential conditional use permit.

Option #3 Change the Planned Unit Development Section of the Zoning Regulations

Proposal: Planned Unit Developments are listed as a conditional use permit in the R-2 zoning district. However, they are currently limited to project of at least 2 acres and also the language currently reads:

The predominate land use in a Planned Unit Development shall be a permitted use in the underlying zoning district. Therefore, the predominate land use in a residentially zoned district shall be residential uses; the predominate land use in a business zoned district shall be commercial uses; and the predominate land use in an industrial zoned district shall be industrial uses

The problem with this language concerning the adaptive reuse of institutional properties in the R-2 zoning districts is that it would require that the predominant use be a duplex. This language could be changed to allow for a multi-family adaptive use of a historic building. Currently, the language is not clear. The language could also be revised to allow a PUD with less than 2 acres; for example, this could be reduced to 1 acre for predominantly residential PUDs.

Staff Recommendation

The Commission could proceed with any of these options or a combination of options 2 and 3. Please discuss and provide direction to the Planning Department.

MEMO

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner 

DATE: August 7, 2013

RE: Small House and Infill Construction

In discussing the August 14th Planning Commission agenda with Chairman Jay his desire is to focus on the Whittier zoning process. He is however interested in some discussion on the 14th about small house and infill construction.

In previous discussion about these issues the Planning Commission requested more information about vacant property and their size. We have been able to identify vacant property in the city by using a \$20,000 maximum value. The presumption being that a parcel with a value less than \$20,000 is most likely vacant. A maximum parcel size was set at ½ acre which reduced the original parcel number to 358 parcels.

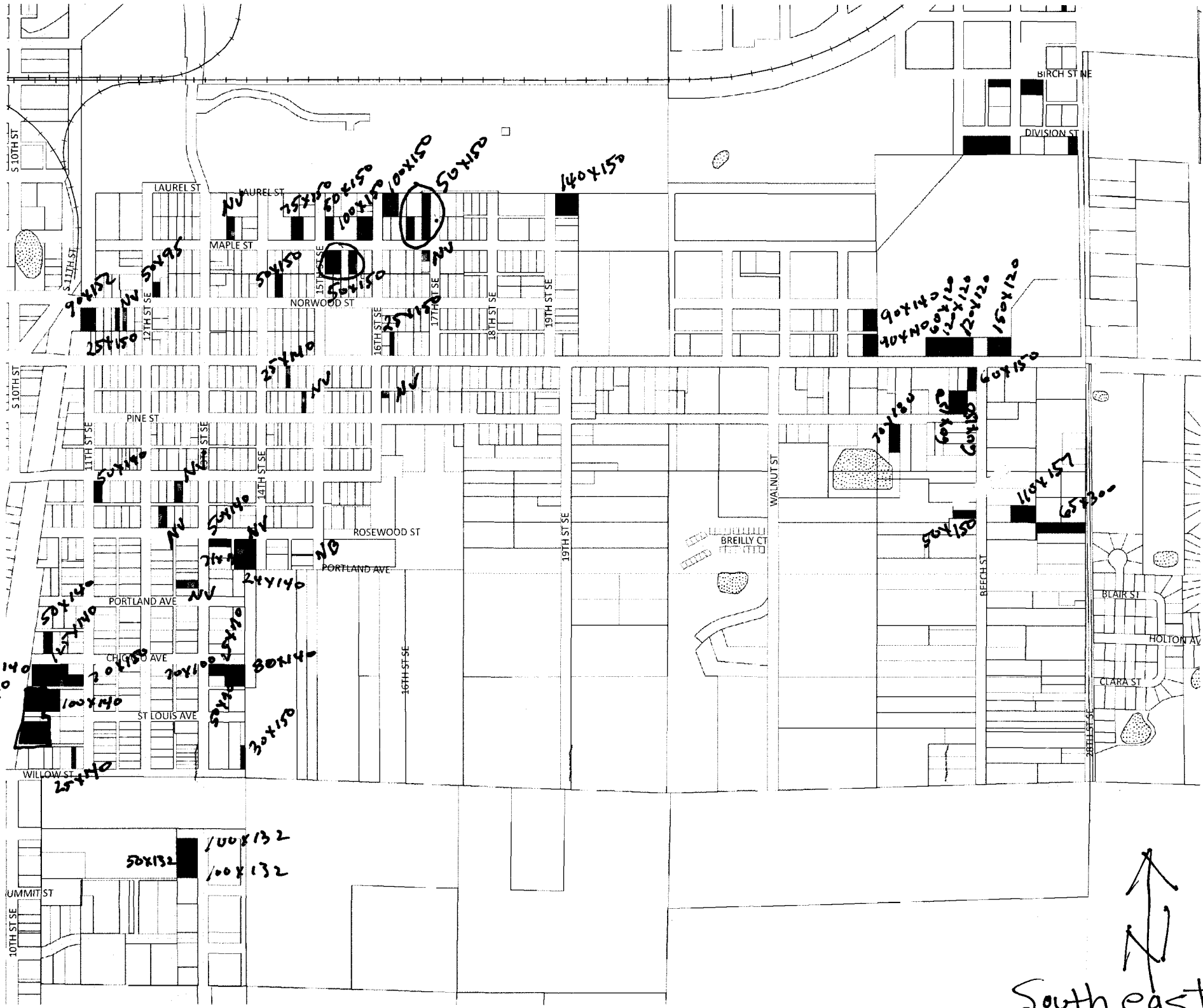
I have driven around the community to verify whether the parcels are indeed vacant and I did observe a few parcels do have a dwelling or some type of building. Using aerial photography and a parcel map the Planning Department estimated parcel sizes for most lots in the three areas. The "NV" on the maps specifies the parcel is "Not Vacant." It appears there are approximately 92 lots that have the potential in the areas identified on the attached maps.

Following are some conclusions based upon the research thus far:

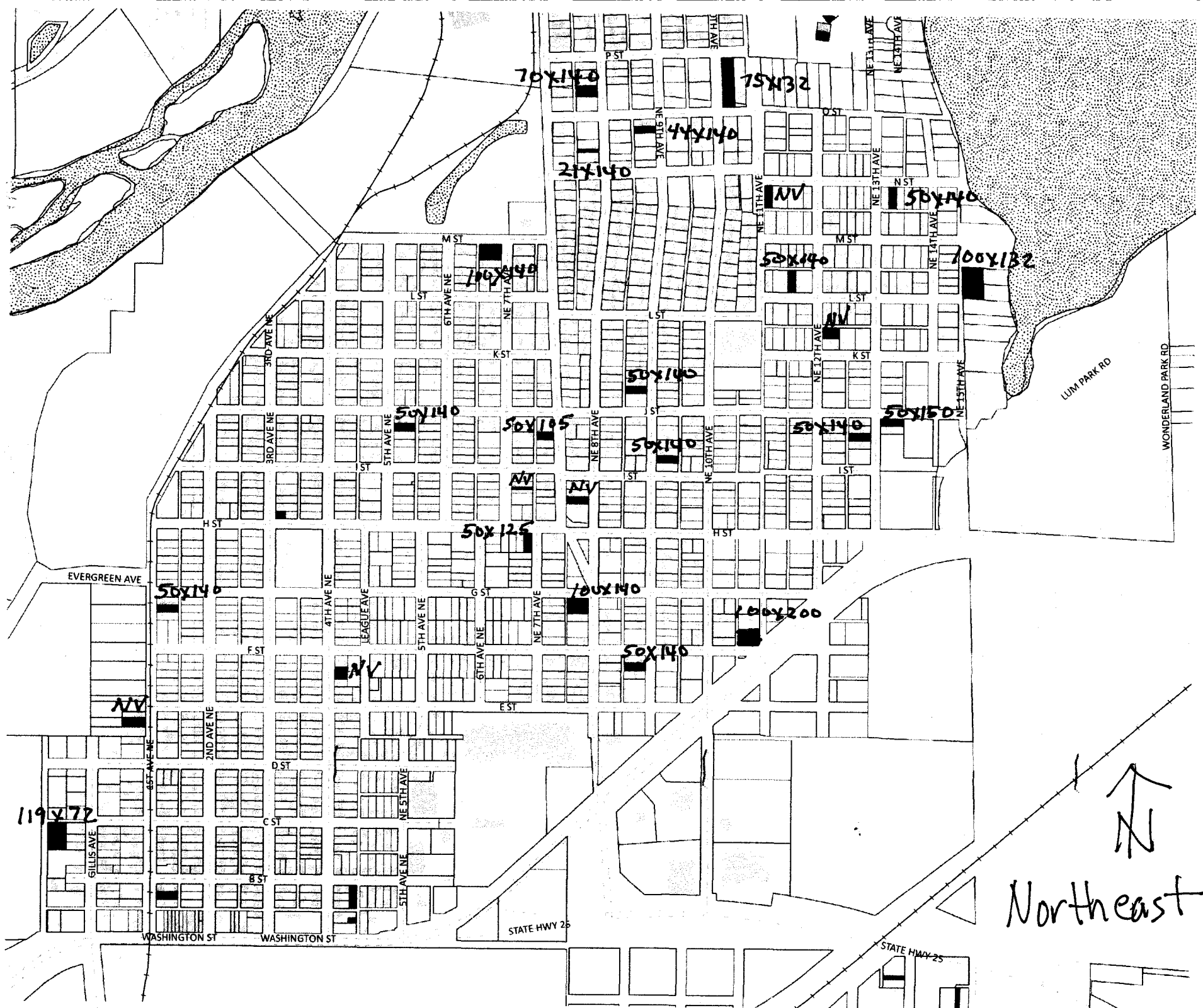
1. The amount of individual 25' wide lots is less than expected.
2. There is a significant number of 50'x140' and 50'x150' parcels in the City.
3. This total does not include property that may have a dwelling but could be split to create another developable parcel.

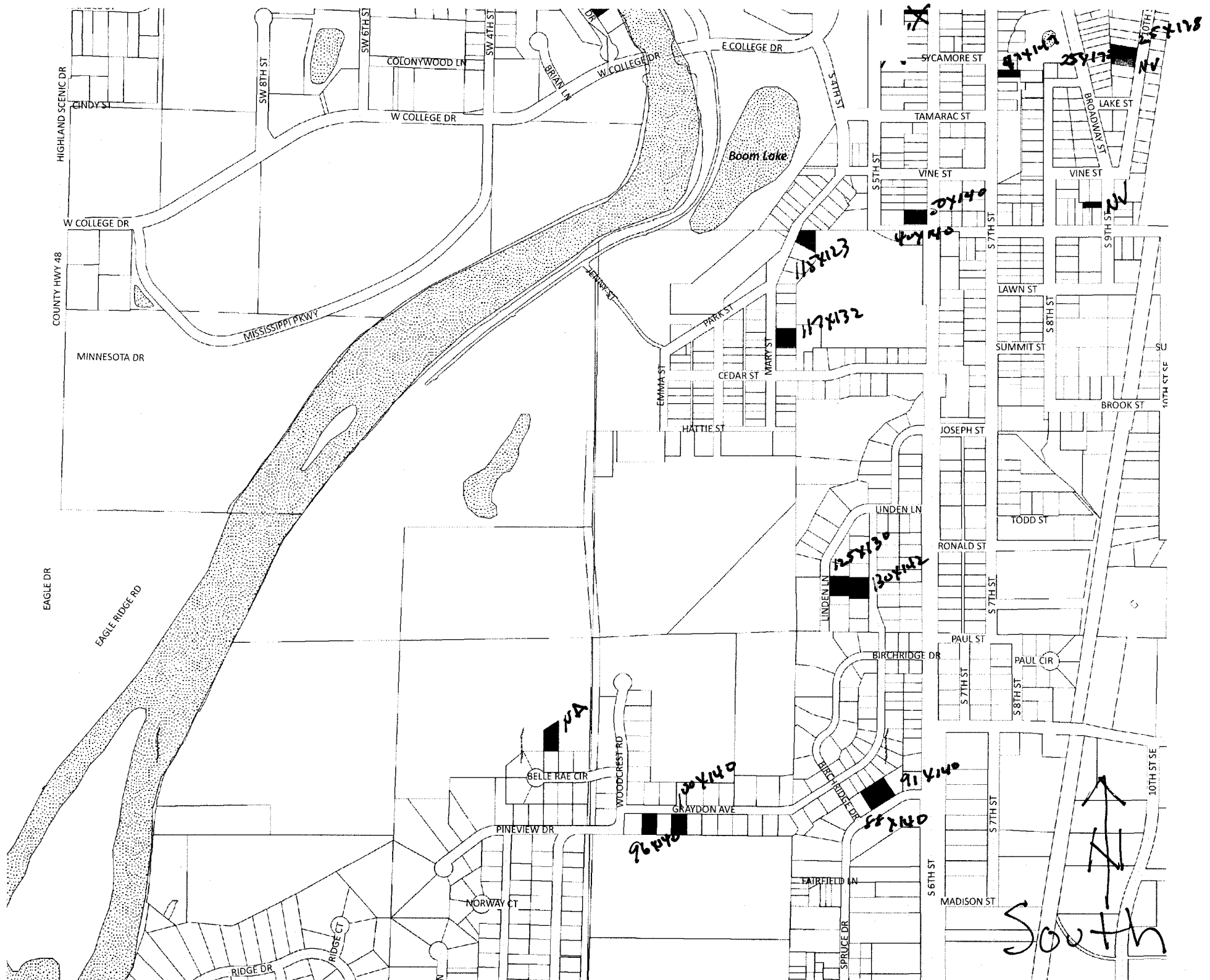
Attached is an example of how Zoning Ordinance residential district language could be modified to add infill development and small house development. Chairman Jay has expressed interest in forming a committee to further address this issue. Reviewing an example like the attached may help in that discussion.

I have talked with Progressive Property Management owner Rick Fargo about gaining access to a small house in Brainerd. 905 10th Ave NE a property managed by Mr. Fargo has a 300 sf house. The tenant will permit Mr. Fargo to show the house to Planning Commissioners between 4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 13th. If your schedule permits show up anytime during that ½ hour.



↑
N
South east





SECTION 54
R-1, SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

Section:

- 515-54-1: Purpose and Intent
- 515-54-2: Permitted Uses
- 515-54-3: Accessory Uses
- 515-54-4: Interim Uses
- 515-54-5: Conditional Uses
- 515-54-6: Uses by Administrative Permit
- 515-54-7: Lot Area and Setback Requirements
- 515-54-8: Building Height
- 515-54-9: Building Performance Standards
- 515-54-10: Lot Coverage

515-54-1: Purpose and Intent. This district is established to allow and preserve areas in the City of quiet neighborhoods of one and two family homes, free from other uses except those which are compatible with residents of such a district.

515-54-2: Permitted Uses.

- A. Detached single family dwellings.
- B. Public recreation areas and related accessory buildings and structures.
- C. Residential facilities serving six (6) or fewer persons in a single family detached dwelling.
- D. Essential services as regulated by Section 36 of this Ordinance.

515-54-3: Accessory Uses.

- A. Garages and open off-street parking for private residential use subject to the provisions of Section 17.
- B. Fences as regulated by Section 19 of this Ordinance.
- C. Storage of recreational vehicles and equipment for private use as regulated by Section 24 of this Ordinance.
- D. Solar energy systems and structures.
- E. Home Businesses as regulated by Section 26 of this Ordinance.

- F. Tool houses and sheds and other such buildings for the storage of domestic tools, supplies and equipment subject to the provisions of Section 17 of this Ordinance.
- G. Private recreational facilities for the enjoyment of the residents of the principal building and their occasional guests.
- H. In home day care serving fourteen (14) or fewer persons in a single family detached dwelling.
- I. Radio and television receiving antennas, satellite dishes, TV Receive Only (TVRO) three (3) meters or less in diameter, short-wave radio dispatching antennas, or those necessary for the operation of electronic equipment including radio receivers, ham radio transmitters and television receivers as regulated by Section 35 of this Ordinance.

515-54-4: Interim Uses.

- A. Home Extended Businesses as regulated by Section 26 of this Ordinance.
- B. Temporary buildings associated with a public or private principal school building and used for classrooms.

515-54-5: Conditional Uses.

- A. Off-premise surface parking lots and parking ramps subject to provisions of Section 22 of this Ordinance.
- B. Bed and breakfast subject to provisions of Section 31 of this Ordinance.
- C. Non-profit and not-for-profit offices located in buildings owned by the Brainerd Independent School District, not used for classroom education and subject to the following minimum requirements:
 - 1. One (1) off-street parking space for each three hundred (300) square feet of office space.
 - 2. No individual exterior entrances.
 - 3. Business hours are limited from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
 - 4. No exterior business signs.
- D. Planned Unit Developments as regulated by Section 11 of this Ordinance.

- E. Government and public regulated utility buildings and structures necessary for the health, safety and general welfare of the community provided that when abutting a residential use in a residential use district, the property is screened and landscaped in accordance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.
- F. Public and private schools provided that:
 - 1. The site accesses a major collector.
 - 2. The site is landscaped in accordance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.
 - 3. Off-street parking is provided in accordance with Section 22 of this Ordinance.
 - 4. Off-street loading and service entrances are provided as regulated by Section 23 of this Ordinance.
 - 5. Emergency vehicle access is provided to and within the site.
- G. Hospitals provided that:
 - 1. Side yards are double the minimum requirements established for this district and are screened in compliance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.
 - 2. The site shall be served by an arterial or collector street of sufficient capacity to accommodate traffic which will be generated.
 - 3. All State Statutes and regulations governing such use are strictly adhered to and all required operating permits are secured.
- H. Places of worship and related buildings provided that:
 - 1. Side yards shall be thirty (30) feet.
 - 2. Adequate screening from abutting residential uses and landscaping is provided in compliance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.
 - 3. Adequate off-street parking and access is provided on the site or on lots directly abutting or directly across a public street or alley to the principal use in compliance with Section 22 of this Ordinance and that such parking is adequately screened and landscaped from surrounding and abutting residential uses in compliance with Section 20 of this Ordinance.
 - 4. Adequate off-street loading and service entrances are provided and regulated where applicable by Section 23 of this Ordinance.

I INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND DWELLINGS LESS THAN SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY (750) SQUARE PROVIDED THAT:

1. COMPLIANCE WITH MINIMUM SETBACK REQUIREMENTS LISTED IN SECTION 515-54-7.

2. THE DWELLING SHALL INCLUDE:

- A. BUILDING ORIENTATION SHALL MATCH THE PREDOMINANT ORIENTATION OF OTHER BUILDINGS ALONG THE BLOCK FACE.**
- B. ACCESS AND LOCATION OF OFF-STREET PARKING SHALL BE SIMILAR TO THE PREDOMINANT CHARACTER FOR EXISTING DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE BLOCK FACE. PRIMARY VEHICULAR ACCESS SHALL BE THROUGH REAR ALLEYS WHERE SUCH RIGHTS-OF-WAY EXIST, AND ON-SITE PARKING SHALL BE LOCATED TO THE REAR OF PROPOSED STRUCTURES, INsofar AS THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PREDOMINANT CHARACTER OF THE BLOCK FACE.**
- C. ROOFS SHALL BE SIMILAR IN SLOPE, MATERIAL, AND STYLE TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND SHALL INCORPORATE ANY OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FEATURES, TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH EXISTING DEVELOPMENT ON THE BLOCK FACE:**
 - I. DORMERS;**
 - II. GABLED OR HIPPED ROOFS;**
 - III. PITCHED ROOFS;**
 - IV. PARAPETS OR CORNICES.**

UNLESS IT IS THE PREDOMINANT EXISTING STYLE ON THE BLOCK FACE, FLAT, UNADORNED ROOFS SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED.

- D. HORIZONTAL FACADES SHALL BE TREATED USING AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TECHNIQUES. THE APPLICANT SHALL DEMONSTRATE THAT THE SELECTED**

TECHNIQUES ARE EITHER CURRENTLY PRESENT ON THE BLOCK FACE OR ARE NOT SUBSTANTIALLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH EXISTING DEVELOPMENT.

- I. BAYS OR RECESSES (MINIMUM DEPTH OF 18 INCHES);
- II. WINDOW PATTERNS;
- III. CONTRASTING MATERIALS OR COLORS;
- IV. BALCONIES.

515-54-6: Uses by Administrative Permit.

- A. Personal wireless service antennas as regulated by Section 35 of this Ordinance.

515-54-7: Minimum Lot Area and Setback Requirements.

A. Lot Area Requirements:

- 1. Lot size: Seven thousand (7,000) square feet
- 2. Lot Width: Fifty (50) feet
- 3. Lot Depth: Lot depth shall not exceed three (3) times the lot width for the buildable area of the lot

B. Principal Building Setbacks:

- 1. Front Yard: Twenty (20) feet
- 2. Side Yard: Five (5) feet
- 3. Side Yard (corner): Twenty (20) feet, fifteen (15) feet for an attached garage
- 4. Rear Yard: Twenty-five (25) feet

C. Accessory Building and Structure Setbacks:

- 1. Front Yard: Twenty (20) feet
- 2. Side Yard: Three (3) feet
- 3. Side Yard (corner): Fifteen (15) feet, twenty (20) feet if garage faces street
- 4. Rear Yard: Five (5) feet

515-54-8: Building Height.

- A. Dwellings shall not exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height. Permitted non-residential uses and conditional uses taller than thirty-five (35) feet shall require a Conditional Use Permit.

- B. Accessory building and structure height shall be governed by Section 17 of this Ordinance.

515-54-9: Building Performance Standards.

- A. Minimum floor area per dwelling unit: Seven hundred fifty (750) feet.
- B. Minimum width/length of dwelling unit: Twenty-two (22) feet.
- C. Each dwelling unit shall be located on a permanent foundation with a perimeter curtain wall in accordance with the Brainerd and Minnesota Building Code.

515-54-10: Lot Coverage.

- A. Residential Uses. Impervious surface lot coverage shall not exceed sixty (60) percent of the total lot area.
- B. Non-residential Uses. Impervious surface lot coverage shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of the total lot area unless otherwise allowed by a grading and drainage plan approved by the City Engineer.

StarTribune

Sidewalks gain in suburbs, even as some residents protest

Article by: Mary Jane Smetanka
Star Tribune
June 8, 2013 - 10:21 PM

For proof of the fractured history of sidewalks in suburbia, look no further than Katherine McManus' block of Zarthan Avenue in St. Louis Park.

On a street where children and parishioners walk to the school and church at the end of the block, the sidewalk simply stops at her property line and starts up again three homes down the street. Pedestrians veer into the sometimes-busy street to avoid walking on the grass.

"Walking dogs or having kids in the street seems ridiculously dangerous," McManus said.

Once, cities had sidewalks and suburbs had lawns. Not anymore. Next week, the St. Louis Park City Council is expected to approve a 10-year plan to put a sidewalk within a quarter mile of every resident (fixing the Zarthan gap in 2016). Hopkins and Edina have programs to add sidewalks. This summer, Hennepin County is expected to approve a pedestrian plan that will make the county a more active partner in planning and helping to pay for sidewalks.

The sidewalk movement is linked to a drive to make communities more walkable and is usually paired with efforts to add bikeways. John Archer, a University of Minnesota professor who is an expert on suburbs, said that suburbs are reinventing themselves in response to residents who want to "walk to the fitness center, the coffee shop and the grocery store.

"This is a lifestyle asset, and cities are hip to that," he said. "What St. Louis Park and Edina are doing is saying, we really have to keep up. We have to keep attracting people who want to move here, and make this an attractive place, because people who are moving in don't have the same affections that the old people did.

"Suburbs are evolving with the times. The trick here is not that these places are no longer suburbs. They are not the suburbs they were when people moved there 40 years ago."

St. Louis Park's program to link residents to destinations through a one-quarter mile sidewalk grid is based on feedback from a citizen committee. Sean Walther, a senior planner for the city, said the city wants to connect people to transit stops, schools and major commercial centers.

"Not everyone is driving, or wants to drive, so we want to provide opportunity and choice for that," he said.

Walther said the gaps in St. Louis Park's sidewalks are the result of changing policies and the fact that most sidewalks were added by development when homes were built.

The city has 111 miles of sidewalk; the plan would add about 10.5 miles more. The estimated cost of building sidewalks as well as trails over a decade is \$17 million to \$24 million, which would be paid for through bonding.

Where the sidewalks end

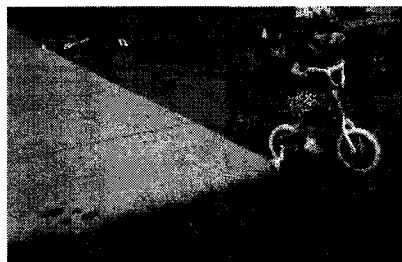
Edina, which traditionally asks property owners to pay for street improvements, has set up a sidewalk construction fund financed with franchise fees, thus avoiding billing individual residents for new sidewalks. The fund is expected to collect \$1.1 million to \$1.2 million each year. The city also is hiring a transportation planner whose duties will include coordinating sidewalk projects.

In Hopkins, which recently approved a pedestrian and bike plan, the city historically had many sidewalks. But from the 1950s to the 1980s, residents were responsible for maintaining them. City Engineer John Bradford said that when homeowners got letters from the city asking them to repair the panels, some people removed parts or all of the sidewalk in front of their homes.

"Seventy-five percent of it is there, but we have the dead-end legs," he said. "We are try to fill the gaps now."

Hopkins officials also want to create sidewalk network that connects to business areas, schools and parks.

"Sidewalks are difficult projects," Bradford said. "Everybody loves the sidewalk — on the other side of the street. That makes for contentious projects."



Jada Thate, 3, got her bike stuck in the grass where the sidewalk ends in her neighborhood in St. Louis Park on Thursday.

ANNA REED • anna.reed@startribune.com,



Neighbors Katherine McManus, left, with her dog Tanner, and Rita DeBrobander stood at the edge of the sidewalk on their street in St. Louis Park on Thursday.

ANNA REED • anna.reed@startribune.com,

Wayne Houle, city engineer in Edina, remembers his first sidewalk project more than a decade ago as "a huge fight." Attitudes are changing, he said, but there's often diverse views on a street when a sidewalk is proposed.

"The majority of the city was developed post-World War II, when car was king," he said. "Trying to retrofit for sidewalks is difficult to do in the existing right of way. You have the room, but you're disturbing a lot of infrastructure."

Often people don't want to shovel a sidewalk. But many residents also forget that the city usually owns a 10- or 15-foot strip of the front yard next to the street. Over the years, trees, gardens and other landscaping crowd that right of way, and people don't want them removed.

When St. Louis Park asked residents who could be affected by the pedestrian plan what they thought, one replied, "We have lived here for 50 years and have never needed a sidewalk. The lawn stretching to the street is a lovely sight."

Wrote another, "I don't want my taxes to go up to pay for a completely unnecessary lark, dreamed up by a bunch of local politicians trying to figure out a way to spend money. ... Save the trees, dump the concrete somewhere else, maybe your neighborhood."

St. Louis Park ended up paring its sidewalk priority list by about 20 percent because of objections from residents or physical barriers, according to City Engineer Scott Brink.

Sidewalks as meeting places

But then there are residents like Katherine McManus and Rita DeBrobander, neighbors on Zarthan Avenue, who are campaigning for a complete sidewalk on their street to be completed sooner than 2016. Sidewalks were built when the older homes on the block were built, but their newer homes never got a walkway.

DeBrobander worries about the safety of children who detour into the street while walking to the parochial school down the block. In the winter, she said, the interrupted sidewalk means everyone simply walks in the street.

"I walk in the street and I feel very safe, but I'm quite conscious of it," she said. "When the sidewalks are there, I use them."

McManus, whose family moved to Zarthan a couple of years ago from another St. Louis Park house just a few blocks away, cites not only safety concerns but social reasons for a complete sidewalk.

"To me, this is a first inner-ring neighborhood of the city, and the sidewalk allows you to meet neighbors and people going by," she said. "It helps neighbors meet neighbors."

Mary Jane Smetanka • 612-673-7380

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Hanging Out in Your Garage Is Not a Crime, Except When it Is

• EMILY BADGER



Shutterstock

The *Detroit Free Press* reports this week on an odd local-ordinance dispute in the suburb of Dearborn, where several local families have taken to using their garages for something other than parking. They've moved in TVs and lawn chairs, laid down tile flooring and – this was apparently the last straw – installed sliding-glass doors where the mechanized garage entrance ought to be.

These families have created a living space – something in between outdoor patio and indoor den – out of what most people treat as a home for their cars. This seems like a clever idea if you have neither (or not enough) of those more traditional spaces, or if you simply don't want to turn over the equivalent of an entire room of your home to your station wagon.

But neighbors and the city aren't on board. According to the *Free Press*, they're concerned that "as people get a little too comfortable hanging out in the garage, more cars are clogging side streets." Officials also argue that garages aren't up to code as living spaces. Now the city is weighing whether to change a law that states that homeowners must be able to park their cars in their garages (these families created little ramps that allow them to drive over the sliding-glass door frames). So do you ban patio doors? Parquet floors?

The story is complicated by the fact that these families are Arab-American, and some people in town are accusing their critics of an "ethnic reaction" to the practice of long sessions of socializing around a hookah. But beyond that plotline – which city officials deny – the story raises a couple of interesting questions about both what defines a "living space" and how homeowners anywhere should get to use their garages when they own no cars at all.

After all, we celebrate entrepreneurs who launch start-up companies in these neglected spaces. Why scold families who want to socialize there instead?

Dearborn's planning commission chairman concedes to the *Free Press* that plenty of other people in town probably have too much junk in their garages to park their cars there ("Man caves and that kind of thing"). So the ordinance seems silly to start with. Perhaps the safety concern is a legitimate one if more people really are going to start converting these parking spots into family space. But we've devoted an awful lot of real estate over the years to automobiles in the U.S., never more prominently than in the hulking garages on the front of our homes. It would be a shame if people who wanted to couldn't figure out how to take some of that space back.

PC

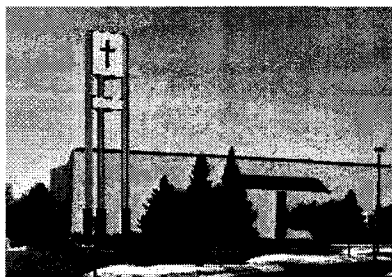
StarTribune

Burnsville church will get a tower courtesy Verizon Wireless

Article by: Laurie Blake
Star Tribune
June 8, 2013 - 4:33 PM

Unable to find a location to put up an antenna tower in southeast Burnsville, Verizon Wireless will build a decorative church tower instead and use the sign of the cross to hide 12 antennas positioned inside.

The 75-foot high "stealth tower" has been welcomed by Church of the Risen Savior at 1501 E. County Road 42 because it will bring the church income and add a touch of character to the white, clean-lined church building.



Burnsville consulting planner Alan Bixius called the planned tower "one of the more attractive" he has seen.

Rendering by Design 1.

"The church doesn't necessarily look like a church," said Tim Keegan, a member of the church finance council. Such a tower "will certainly make it more identifiable as a worship facility." The cross will be displayed at the top of the tower on three sides.

If Verizon is committing to the expense of building a new antenna tower, it does not add much more cost to design it as a church tower, Keegan said.

Although there are two similar church bell towers in Bloomington, Verizon said it designed this one specifically for Risen Savior.

"This is one of the more attractive towers I have ever seen," said Alan Bixius, a consulting planner for the city of Burnsville who recommended its approval.

"The church is white, and the tower is integrated to match and complement it. You don't see the antenna rays or anything else to suggest it is anything but a church tower."

The Burnsville City Council approved a conditional use permit for the tower last week with the conditions that the tower not be illuminated, that it not carry advertising and that an accompanying equipment shelter match the color and materials of the church.

The tower will stand 8 feet from the church and 175 feet from the nearest property line on Southcross Drive. Evergreens and shrubs will be planted along the base of the tower.

Verizon prefers to build its own cell towers, spokeswoman Karen Smith said. "With a typical cell tower we have more space for equipment and equipment sheds, and we have easier access to the site."

Because "everybody wants their mobile devices to work wherever they go," and no locations are available for a regular tower, the company sometimes turns to church sites, she said.

Another type of "stealth design" used by phone companies looks like a pine tree. Smith said she does not know of any in Minnesota.

Laurie Blake • 952-746-3287

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PC

Roundabouts are catching on, and MnDOT says they're helping make roads safer, too

By Bob Shaw bshaw@pioneerpress.com TwinCities.com-Pioneer Press
Posted:

TwinCities.com

Roundabouts are becoming the most popular thing on Minnesota roads since dotted white lines.

There are more than 115 of the circular intersections statewide, and an additional 39 are planned or under construction.

The state champion? Woodbury -- with 11 roundabouts built, planned or under construction, more than any other city.

As more are built, a growing amount of data is proving that roundabouts save lives and increase the flow of traffic. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is looking for more opportunities to build them.

"The data show that they are the safest intersections we have," said Ken Johnson, a roundabout expert at MnDOT.

How safe are they? Johnson says they are one reason the state's highway fatalities are dropping.

No one has proved a connection, but fatalities started falling four years ago, which is about when the state's roundabout building binge began.

Typical is the state's first roundabout, built near New Prague seven years ago.

The intersection had been the site of two deaths and 50 injury-causing accidents in five years. But since the roundabout was installed, there have been no fatalities and only four injury crashes.

That is in line with statistics from the U.S. Transportation Department, which says roundabouts reduce fatalities by 90 percent.

Nationally, multilane roundabouts have roughly the same number of accidents as signal-controlled intersections but 70 percent fewer injury-causing accidents.

That's because roundabouts not only change how often cars crash, but how they crash.

A typical intersection has traffic crossing at right angles. If a drunk driver speeds through a red light, he can hit the most vulnerable part of a car -- the side.

"Roundabouts eliminate that kind of crash," said Washington County engineer Wayne Sandberg.

Traffic must slow down to enter the roundabout. If vehicles collide, they are more likely to be going in the same direction.

Besides safety, the other primary advantage of roundabouts is speed.

During rush hours, MnDOT's Johnson said, cars travel through roundabouts an average of 10 seconds faster. In nonpeak hours, traffic slows only slightly at a roundabout instead of making a full stop at a red light, night or day.

Roundabouts do have some drawbacks.

"They are not a silver bullet for every intersection," Sandberg said.

The circular centerpiece requires more land than a regular intersection.

They don't work as well when a busy highway crosses a smaller street. When one of the intersecting roads carries 90 percent of the total traffic, then engineers prefer other kinds of intersections.

Overall, roundabouts cost about the same as intersections with lights -- usually between \$1 million to \$1.5 million. But the long-term operational costs are lower.

Roundabouts are better for the environment. They consume no electricity, and they avoid pollution from idling cars at stoplights.

They have less paved area, which means that pollution-bearing runoff is reduced. In a conventional intersection of four-lane roads, the additional turn lanes can make roads seven lanes wide where they meet.

"Those intersections are like a sea of pavement," Johnson said. And the turn lanes must begin well before the intersection.

One reason roundabouts are on a roll is because drivers are getting used to them.

When roundabouts first became common, so many drivers were nervous about using them that Washington County decided to teach drivers directly.

It established Roundabout U, an outreach program teaching navigational skills. In addition, Sandberg said, drivers' education programs have been encouraged to include segments on roundabout driving.

The result is more acceptance. Woodbury is the state's roundabout champ partly because of a recent survey in which residents said they liked roundabouts, Sandberg said.

Roundabouts also proliferate in fast-growing suburbs because new roads are being built.

How many roundabouts will be right for Minnesota?

MnDOT's Johnson said 5,000 roundabouts have been built in the Australian state of Victoria, which is about the same size as Minnesota.

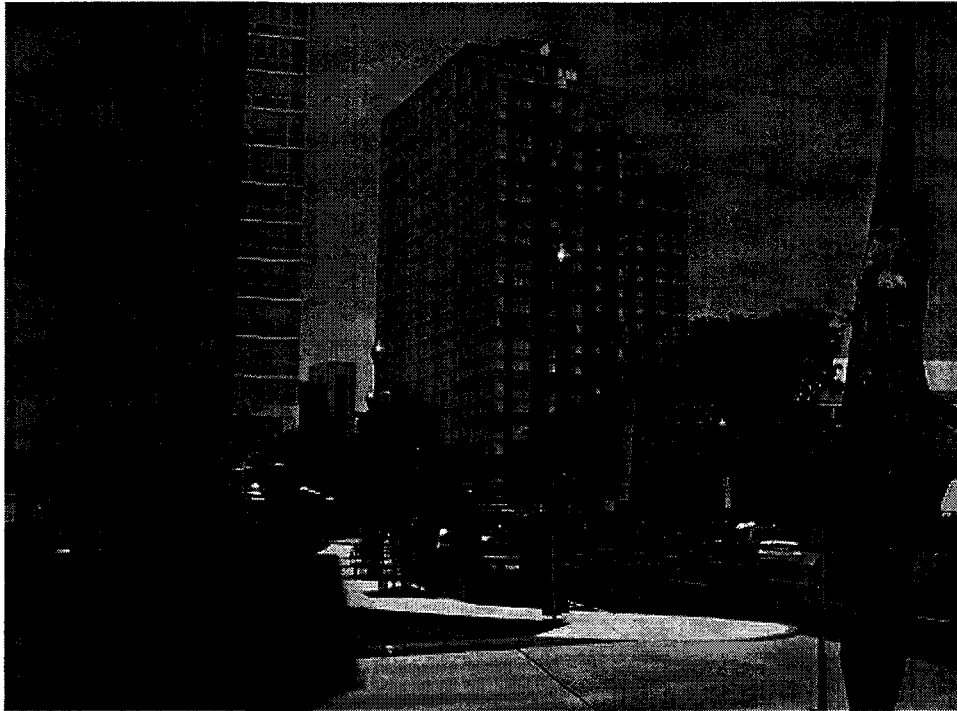
"I am kind of hoping," he said, "that we will be like that in 30 years."

Bob Shaw can be reached at 651-228-5433. Follow him at twitter.com/BshawPP.

PC

16 Rules for 'Smarter' Smart Growth

- KAID BENFIELD



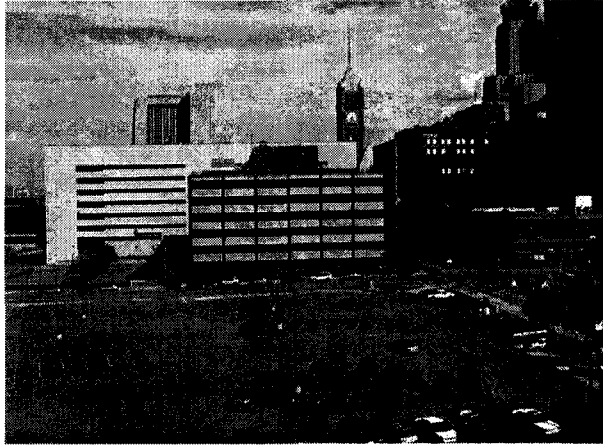
Jacob/Flickr

I hesitate to write yet another article about bringing "smart growth," the combination of ideas born in the 1990s to counter suburban sprawl – into the 21st century. I've long argued that, at a minimum, it's time to update the so-called "ten principle" adopted back then by the Smart Growth Network that emphasize compact development, transportation choices, and so on. We've learned so much since then, about green infrastructure, food, health, green buildings, the merits of moderate density, revitalization and gentrification, and more, that would allow us to make communities even smarter.

But most smart growth advocates remain concentrated on the infill+density+transit formula of the 1990s. The one major addition to the menu that I would recognize since the 1990s has been walkability (and perhaps its cousin, complete streets), and it's an important one. But that's about it, for what the major parts of the smart growth movement spend their time on.

So I was heartened to see a Twitter link earlier this week to an article in the awkwardly named *UrbDeZine San Diego* titled "10 Rules for Smarter Smart Growth." I have company in this lonely quest!

Now, as it turns out, the author of the article, Bill Adams, and I differ in the specific "smarter" ideas that we champion. But what we both have in common is that it's time to get past advocating for the *fact* of smart growth – it's already mainstream in nearly every planning office in the country – and start working on its *quality*.



*Surface parking in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Image courtesy of Zachary Korb/Flickr (left);
Surface parking lot at Metra Electric station. Image courtesy of Steven Vance/Flickr (right)*

Here are Adams's 10 rules:

1. **Purge the term NIMBY from your language and your thinking.** "It stultifies any further understanding of community concerns, or how to reach a compromise." The truth, in my opinion, is that NIMBYs sometimes have a point.
2. **Respect community planning.** It takes seemingly forever, Adams concedes, but it's worth it: "Modern smart growth occurs best through this planning process, not through ad hoc project variances ... Developments that require spot zoning under the smart growth or TOD banner are usually wolves in sheep's clothing."

9. **Prioritize non-auto transportation by creating unique or exclusive pedestrian and bicycle amenities.** Adams argues that walking and cycling routes don't have to be adjacent to driving routes; there are lots of places where they can be tucked in, to great benefit. I agree.
10. **Design for human nature, honed over millions of years, rather than efficiencies and logic, decided upon during the course of design.** "Such design is often counter-intuitive. This concept is exemplified in the attraction of people to small spaces, crowded rooms, and long lines." That's an excellent point, and perhaps also a nod to "original green" thinking. It seldom makes sense to try to outsmart human nature. (I will differ on one point: most humans I know abhor long lines; if they are in one, it's certainly not because of the line.)

I agree with the essence of just about all of these, especially numbers 1, 2, 5 and 6. Adams adds a number 11, as well, **preserve and enhance existing density and urban fabric.** Since that was pretty much my whole point two days ago, I'm certainly not going to disagree now.

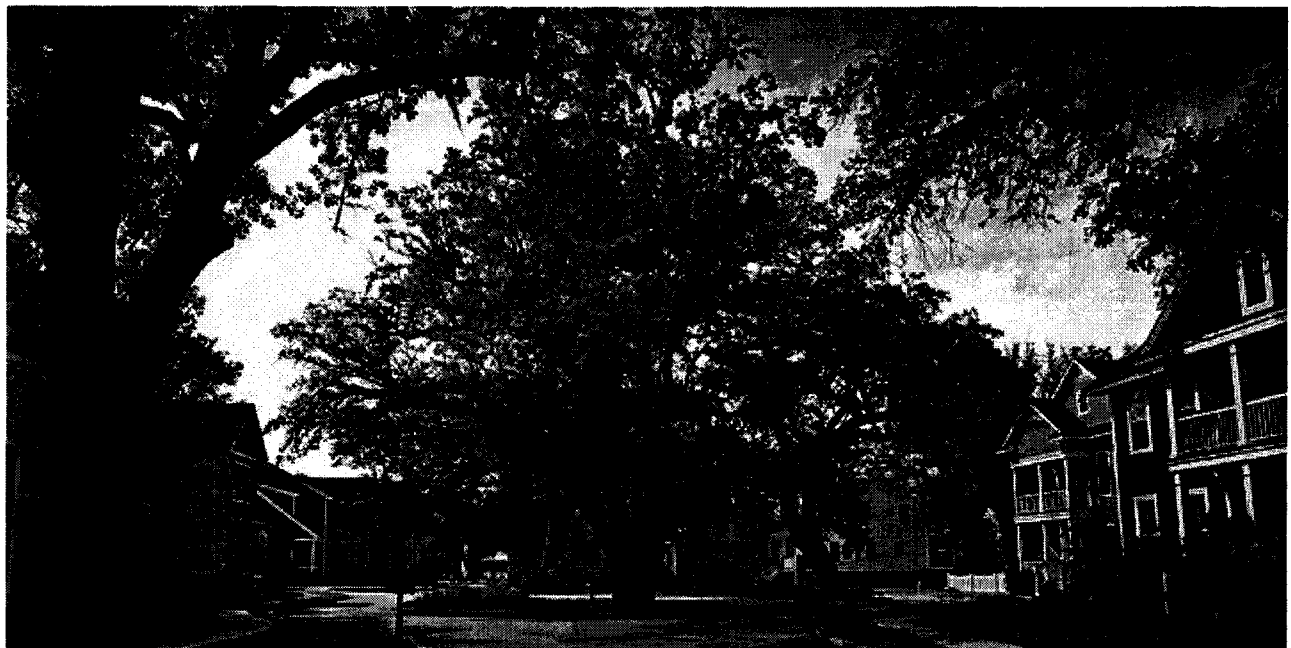


Image courtesy of North Charleston/Flickr

Here are four that I would add to make it a round 15:

- **Integrate nature into the community,** especially at the neighborhood scale, as with pocket parks, green infrastructure, street trees and the like. We humans

3. **Integrate with the surrounding community.** "A successful smart growth project recognizes the existing desirable and undesirable neighborhood patterns, and works to fit in with the former and tweak the latter."
4. **In transit oriented developments (TODs), transit orientation should exceed auto orientation.** Adams's point on this one mainly seems to be an argument against parking requirements and provision. As a general rule, the proposition of transit-first, cars-second in TODs should be inarguable (see the egregious example of a 1970s-era, auto-oriented transit station, photo right). But I think there can be sensible provision for parking in TODs; it doesn't have to be all or nothing. Where Adams and I definitely agree is that it isn't TOD unless the transit and development are oriented to one another; having development simply near the station is not enough.
5. **Respect neighborhood character & identity.** "Lack of identity or a negative identity makes increasing neighborhood density difficult. A development that challenges or changes a community's identity architecturally or in terms of land use can undermine the very thing that attracts residents to the neighborhood. Diversity of land uses is good but incompatibility is not. Preserve historic resources and urban fabric." Amen to that.
6. **Increase density incrementally.** "Don't let maximizing density become the enemy of increasing density." I SO agree with that, especially since many of the benefits of smart growth (such as reducing driving and related carbon emissions, and reducing stormwater runoff per capita) are achieved at densities well under 60 dwellings per acre. There are some terrific examples of suburban developments that add density while fitting right in to existing neighborhoods.
7. **Conform to existing "smart" retail corridors and centers.** "A successful smart growth project doesn't add a large amount of retail space on the periphery of an existing successful or resurging commercial district."
8. **Look for opportunities to narrow (verb) streets and vanquish parking lots.** "The antithesis of smart growth and the trademark of sprawl are wide streets, dispersed development, and parking lots." I agree with most of this but think that the first and third of these "sprawl trademarks" are somewhat situational. There are places, for example, where wide, multi-modal boulevards add character and attractiveness to a neighborhood, even a highly urban one. In addition, I know at least one major and highly successful suburban retrofit into a walkable urban center that could not have happened without parking garages. Today it thrives as a true place of multimodal choice. So I would vanquish parking *lots* when opportunities arise, yes, but also incorporate structured and underground parking here and there. There are very few districts in the U.S. that can thrive with no provision for parking at all.

need that sort of thing, and too many developers and municipalities today don't bother.

- **Integrate green technology into buildings and infrastructure.** In this day and age, smart growth just isn't very smart unless it takes every opportunity to reduce emissions and resource consumption. And it's the performance, not the technology, that matters.
- **Employ universal access and age-friendly design.** By 2030, there will be over 40 seniors in the U.S. for every 100 persons of working age. We baby boomers aren't going away, so let's get ready.
- **Make urbanism more family-friendly, too.** We are building better cities with smart growth, but for whom? Do we really want to keep turning a blind eye to such a major segment of our population? In Washington, almost all of the city's population increase over the past decade can be accounted for by an increase in residents between 20 and 35 years old. The number of children younger than 15 dropped by a fifth. I believe we need to change that and, for planners, that means better schools, better parks and playgrounds, and at least some moderate (rather than high) density housing with a little yard space.

Since Adams cheated by adding a "bonus" number 11, I'm adding a bonus number 16: **Pursue communities suitable for a diversity of incomes, housing types, ethnicities, and old/new residents.** That's the future of America; surely it should also be the future of smart growth.



Special Feature

The Secrets of Successful Communities – Part 1: Have a Vision for the Future

by Edward McMahon

July 9th, 2013

The Secrets of Successful Communities

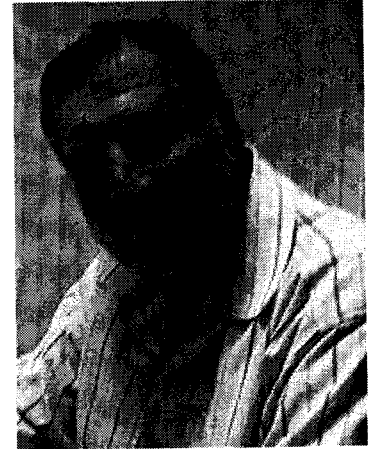
1. Have a vision for the future
2. Inventory community assets and build on them
3. Use education and incentives, not just regulation
4. Pick and choose among development projects
5. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit
6. Pay attention to community aesthetics
7. Have strong leaders and committed citizens

Related articles:

What's the Market Telling Us? by Ed McMahon

Finding Your Economy's Hidden Treasures, by Gwen Hallsmith

Editor's Note: Ed McMahon is one of the country's most incisive analysts of planning and land use issues and trends. He holds the Charles Fraser Chair on Sustainable Development and is a Senior Resident Fellow at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, DC. McMahon is a frequent speaker at conferences on planning and land development. Over the past 21 years, we've been pleased to have published more than two dozen articles by McMahon in the Planning Commissioners Journal, and now on PlannersWeb.com.



There are over 25,000 incorporated communities in America. How many of these are truly successful?

How is it that some small towns and rust belt cities are prospering, while many others are suffering disinvestment, loss of identity, and even abandonment?

Why are some communities able to maintain their historic character and quality of life in the face of a rapidly changing world, while others have lost the very features that once gave them distinction and appeal?

How can communities, both big and small, grow without losing their heart and soul?

From coast to coast, communities are struggling to answer these questions. After working in hundreds of communities in all regions of the country, I have come to some conclusions about why some communities succeed and others fail. There are many communities that have found ways to retain their small town values, historic character, scenic beauty and sense of community, yet sustain a prosperous economy. And they've done it without accepting the kind of cookie-cutter development that has turned many communities into faceless places that young people flee, tourists avoid and which no longer instill a sense of pride in residents.

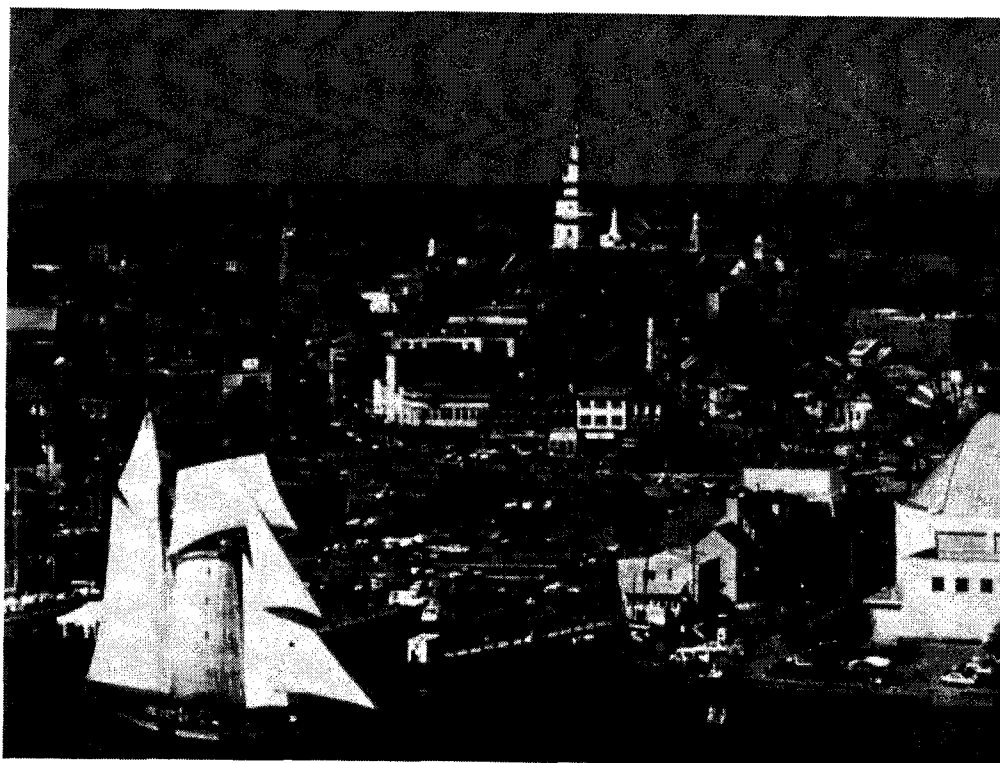
Visioning Can Be
Planning Writ Large, by
Elaine Cogan

V is for Vision, by
Laurence Gerckens

Putting Vision in Our
Plan, by Michael
Chandler

Where Do We Want to
Go? by Jim Segedy and
Lisa Hollingsworth-
Segedy

Every “successful” community has its own strengths and weaknesses, but they all share some common characteristics. It’s clear for instance that successful communities involve a broad cross-section of residents in determining and planning the future. They also capitalize on their distinctive assets — their architecture, history, natural surroundings, and home grown businesses — rather than trying to adopt a new and different identity.



Sometimes a community’s assets are obvious, like in Annapolis, Maryland (above). Sometimes they are not obvious. In the 1970’s Lowell, Massachusetts was dying industrial city. It had an unemployment rate of 25%. It thought it had no assets. But it had abandoned textile mills. Today almost all of these mills — such as the one shown below — have been restored and repurposed. (Note: all photos in article by Ed McMahon unless otherwise noted)



Most successful communities also utilize a variety of private-sector and market incentives to influence their development, instead of relying solely on government regulations.

Not every, successful community displays all of the following characteristics, but most have made use of at least three or four:

1. Have a vision for the future
2. Inventory community assets
3. Build plans on the enhancement of existing assets
4. Use education and incentives, not just regulation
5. Pick and choose among development projects
6. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit
7. Pay attention to community aesthetics
8. Have strong leaders and committed citizens

Have a Vision for the Future

Successful communities always have a plan for the future. Unfortunately, “planning” is a dirty word in some communities, especially in small towns and rural areas. In some places, this is the result of today’s highly polarized political culture. In other places, it results from a misunderstanding of planning and its value.

The truth is, failing to plan, simply means planning to fail. It is difficult to name any successful individual, organization, corporation or community that doesn't plan for the future.

Try to imagine a company that didn't have a business plan. It would have a very hard time attracting investors or staying competitive in the marketplace. The same is true of communities. A community plan is simply a blueprint for the future. People may differ on how to achieve the community's vision, but without a blueprint, a community will flounder.

Understandably, people in small towns don't like change. But change is inevitable.

Technology, the economy, demographics, population growth, market trends and consumer attitudes are always changing and they will affect a community whether people like it or not. There are really only two kinds of change in the world today: planned change and unplanned change.



A community without a plan for the future is simply planning to fail.

Communities can grow by choice or chance. Abraham Lincoln used to say that "the best way to predict the future is to create it yourself." Communities with a vision for the future will always be more successful than communities that just accept whatever comes along.

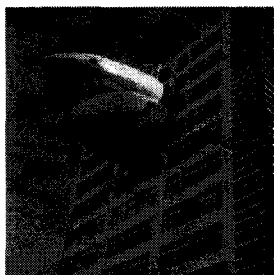
Over the coming week, Ed McMahon will be focusing on seven characteristics of successful communities. What do you think? Share your own "secrets" to having a successful community on our LinkedIn group page, or add a comment below.

We're making McMahon's series publicly available through the end of July. After that, access will be available only to PlannersWeb members. [Join as a member today](#), and support our ability to provide content aimed at meeting the needs of citizen planners. You'll also receive exclusive access to more than 500 articles previously published in the Planning Commissioners Journal and on PlannersWeb.

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Special Feature

The Secrets of Successful Communities – Part 2: Inventory Community Assets

by Edward McMahon

July 10th, 2013

The Secrets of Successful Communities

1. Have a vision for the future
2. Inventory community assets and build on them
3. Use education and incentives, not just regulation
4. Pick and choose among development projects
5. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit
6. Pay attention to community aesthetics
7. Have strong leaders and committed citizens

Related articles:

Cultural Asset Mapping,
by Rob Voigt

What's Your Community's "John Hancock"? by Amy Facca

Creating a vision for the future begins by inventorying a community's assets: natural, architectural, human, educational, economic, and so on.

Twenty-first century economic development focuses on what a community has, rather than what it doesn't have. Too many cities and towns spend all their time and money on business recruitment. They build an industrial park out by the airport and then they try like crazy to attract a plant, factory or distribution center to move there. The few communities that are "successful" at this strategy usually accomplish it by giving away the store.

The old economic development paradigm was about cheap land, cheap gas and cheap labor. It was about shotgun recruitment and low cost positioning. In the old economy, the most important infrastructure investment was roads. Today, successful economic development is about laser recruitment and high value positioning. Today highly trained talent is more important than cheap labor and investing in education is far more valuable than widening the highway.

American communities are littered with projects that were sold as a "silver bullet" solution to a city's economic woes: the New Jersey State Aquarium in Camden, New Jersey; Vision Land Amusement Park in Birmingham, Alabama; the Galleria Mall in Worcester, Massachusetts; the Winter Garden in Niagara Falls, New York — to name just a few.

Too many communities think that economic revival is about the one big thing. Whether it is a convention center, a casino, a festival marketplace, a sports arena, or an aquarium, city after city has followed the copycat logic of competition. If your city has a big convention center, my city needs an even bigger one. Festival marketplaces worked fine in cities like Boston and Baltimore, but similar projects went bankrupt in Toledo, Richmond, and a dozen other communities.

Assets that Build Your Local Economy, by Gwendolyn Hallsmith

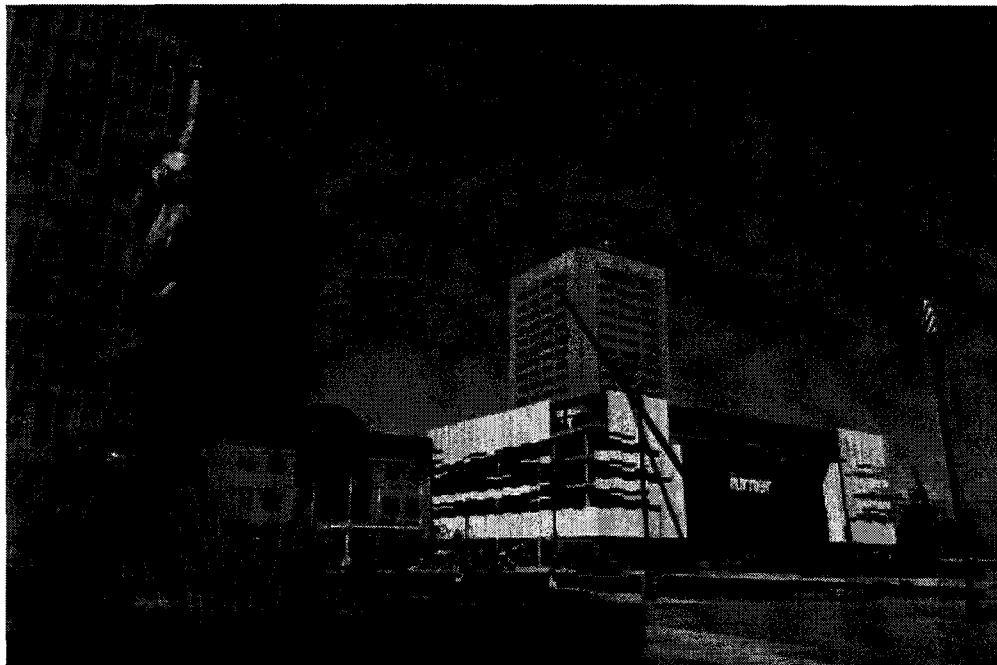
Reinventing Your Community From the Inside Out, by Jim Segedy & Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy

A "Community Character" Inventory, by Wendy Grey

Downtowns Grow One Step at a Time, by Roberta Gratz

Successful economic development is rarely about the one big thing. More likely, it is about lots of little things working synergistically together in a plan that makes sense. In her award winning book – *The Living City* – author, Roberta Brandes Gratz says that “successful cities think small in a big way.”

Two examples of this are Silver Spring, Maryland and Cleveland, Ohio. Cleveland had an aging, undersized convention center. Civic boosters argued for a huge new convention center that could compete with much bigger cities like Chicago, Atlanta, or Minneapolis. But small cities like Cleveland will never win in an arms race to build the biggest convention center. Instead Cleveland took a look at its assets, one of which is the Cleveland Clinic — a world renowned medical center located a short distance from downtown. Instead of trying to compete with every other convention city, Cleveland decided to build a smaller, less expensive meeting facility — the Cleveland Medical Mart and Global Center for Health Innovation – focused on medical conventions and which would have an attached medical mart, affiliated with the Cleveland Clinic.



Cleveland's Global Center for Health Innovation — the white building with the black striping — is located in the heart of downtown, next to the city's War Memorial Fountain. Photo by Erik Drost; Flickr Creative Commons License.

Another example of asset based economic development is Silver Spring, Maryland. For many years, Silver Spring was among the largest suburban commercial centers in the Mid-Atlantic region. But, by the early 1990's Silver Spring had fallen on hard times. In 1996, a story in the *Economist* said “You can see America wilting in downtown Silver Spring. Old office blocks stand empty. A grand art deco theater is frequented only by ghosts. Glitzy department stores have decamped to out-of-town shopping malls. Tattoo parlors, pawnbrokers and discounters remain.”

To combat this decline, local officials and an out of town developer proposed to build a second Mall of America (like the one in Bloomington, Minnesota). The proposed mega-mall would have 800 stores and it would cover 27 acres. The projected cost was \$800 million and it would require a \$200 million public subsidy. It would also mean the demolition of most of downtown Silver Spring's existing buildings.

So what happened? The county rejected the massive American Dream Mall and set their sights on a succession of more modest developments. First, they realized that despite its decline, Silver Spring had some important assets that were probably more valuable than a giant mega-mall. First, Silver Spring was adjacent to Washington, DC, the nation's capital. Second it was served by transit (i.e. the Washington Metro system), and third it was surrounded by stable middle-class neighborhoods.

Rather than spending \$200 million subsidizing a giant mall, county and state officials collaborated to find a site for the new headquarters for the Discovery Communications Corp, which was then housed in several different locations around the Washington area.



Shark Week. A massive inflatable Great White Shark in 5 pieces adorns the Discovery Channel HQ building in Silver Spring, Maryland. Photo by Glyn Lowe Photoworks; Flickr Creative Commons license.

The site where Discovery Communications decided to build their new headquarters was adjacent to the Silver Spring Metro Station. Bringing 1500 employees to downtown Silver Spring was a huge boost to the community, but what really synergized the renewal was Discovery Corp's agreement not to build a cafeteria in their new headquarters building. This meant employees would have to patronize local restaurants.

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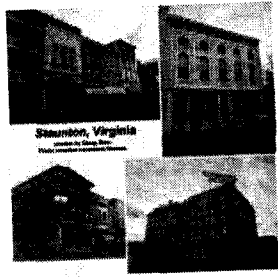
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Tags: Ed McMahon, Livable Communities, Misc. Planning Tools, Potpourri



Special Feature

The Secrets of Successful Communities – Part 3: Use Education and Incentives, Not Just Regulation

July 11th, 2013

The Secrets of Successful Communities

1. Have a vision for the future
 2. Inventory community assets and build on them
 3. Use education and incentives, not just regulation
 4. Pick and choose among development projects
 5. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit
 6. Pay attention to community aesthetics
 7. Have strong leaders and committed citizens
-

by Edward McMahon

Successful communities use education, incentives, partnerships, and voluntary initiatives not just regulation. To be sure, land use regulations and ordinances are essential to protecting public health and to setting minimum standards of conduct in a community.

Regulations prevent the worst in development, but they rarely bring out the best. Regulations are also subject to shifting political winds. Often one county commission or town council will enact tough regulations only to see them repealed or weakened by a future town council or commission with a different ideology or viewpoint.

If regulations aren't the entire answer, how can a community encourage new development that is in harmony with local aspirations and values?

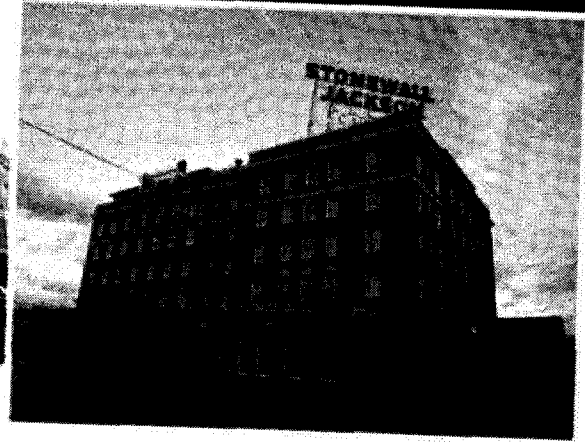
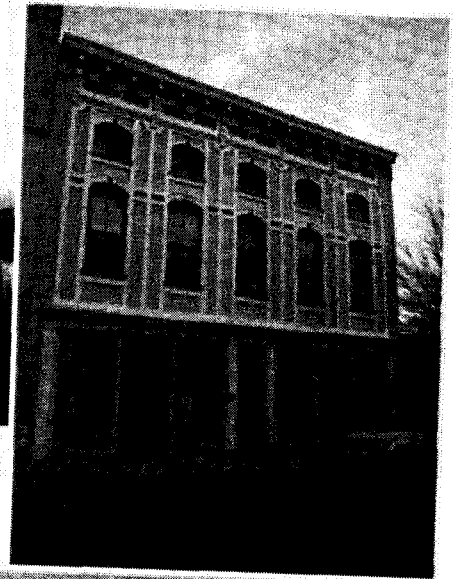
Communities need to use carrots, not just sticks. They also need to use education, partnerships, and voluntary initiatives. Successful communities have identified a variety of creative ways to influence the development process outside of the regulatory process. Some of the incentives they use include: conservation easements; purchase of development rights; expedited permit review; tax abatements that promote the rehabilitation of historic buildings; award and recognition programs; density bonuses for saving open space; and other techniques.

In Staunton, Virginia the Historic Staunton Foundation offered free design assistance to any downtown business owner who would restore the façade of their building. They did this after the city council had rejected a measure to create an historic district in downtown Staunton. At first, only one business owner took advantage of the incentive, but then a second business owner restored his building facade, and then a third, and then many more. Today, there are five historic districts in Staunton including the entire downtown, but it all began with an incentive.



Staunton, Virginia

photos by Doug Kerr.
Flickr creative commons license.



Editor's note: Staunton promotes itself, in large part, through its historic heritage and building preservation. Take a look at the short video below prepared by Visit Staunton.



Ed McMahon also mentions the Historic Staunton Foundation (HSF). According to a quite interesting article by Logan Ward in *Preservation* magazine (January/February 2012):

Year after year [since its formation in 1971 following the demolition of dozens of historic buildings], HSF documented the amount of money invested in preservation and its positive economic effects. City council members and city managers eventually got on board. "Before that, you had nobody doing anything for 10 years except talking about demolition," says [Bill] Frazier [who became executive director of HSF in 1976]. "It was a big shift in the city's consciousness. ... Staunton has completely turned itself around. Restaurants, shops, and live music venues line the small grid of downtown streets. ... In the city's five distinct historic districts, property values have climbed by 279 percent on average since 1983. Since 2000 alone, more than \$50 million in private investment on historic tax-credit projects — from single-family homes to mixed-use commercial projects — has poured into the city.

Successful communities also use education to encourage voluntary action by citizens. **Why do cities and towns need to use education?** Because, education reduces the need for regulation. Also, because people and businesses will not embrace what they don't understand. Finally, community education is important because, citizens have a right to choose the future, but they need to know what the choices are.

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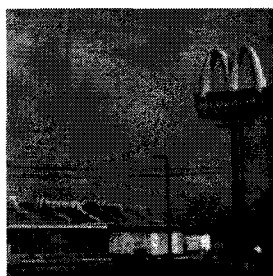
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Tags: Ed McMahon, Zoning & Land Use Regulations



Special Feature

The Secrets of Successful Communities – Part 4: Pick and Choose Among Development Projects

July 12th, 2013

The Secrets of
Successful
Communities

by Edward McMahon

All development is not created equal. Some development projects will make a community a better place to live, work, and visit. Other development projects will not.

1. Have a vision for the future

2. Inventory community assets and build on them

3. Use education and incentives, not just regulation

4. Pick and choose among development projects

5. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit

6. Pay attention to community aesthetics

7. Have strong leaders and committed citizens

The biggest impediment to better development in many communities is a fear of saying “no” to anything. In my experience, communities that will not say no to anything will get the worst of everything.

The proof is everywhere, communities that set low standards or no standards will compete to the bottom. On the other hand, communities that set high standards will compete to the top. This is because they know that if they say no to bad development they will always get better development in its place.

Too many elected officials have an “it’ll do” attitude toward new development. Worse yet, they’ll accept anything that comes down the pike, even if the proposed project is completely at odds with the community’s well thought out vision for the future. They are simply afraid to place any demands on a developer for fear that the developer will walk away if the community asks for too much. This is especially true when dealing with out of town developers or with national chain stores and franchises.

The bottom line for most developers, especially chain stores and franchises, is securing access to profitable trade areas. They evaluate locations based on their economic potential. If they are asked to address local design, historic preservation, site planning or architectural concerns they will usually do so. Bob Gibbs, one of America’s leading development consultants says that “when a chain store developer comes to town they generally have three designs (A, B, or C) ranging from Anywhere USA to Unique (sensitive to local character).

Related articles by Ed McMahon:

All Development is Not Created Equal

Making a Visible Difference

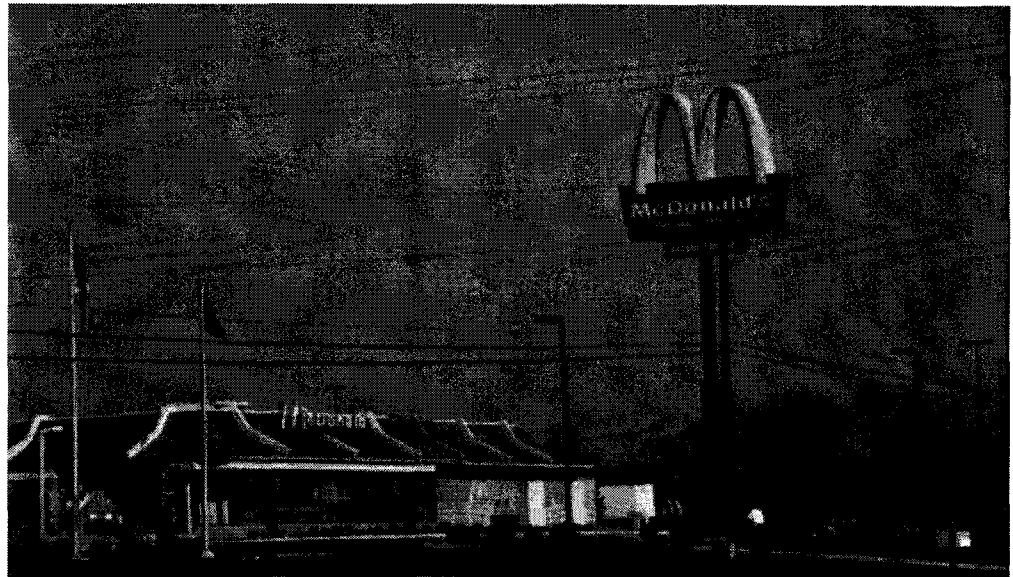
Design Matters

Have It Your Way: Fast Food Restaurant Design

The Place Making Dividend

See also:

Stand by Your Plan, by Jim Segedy, FAICP, and Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy, AICP



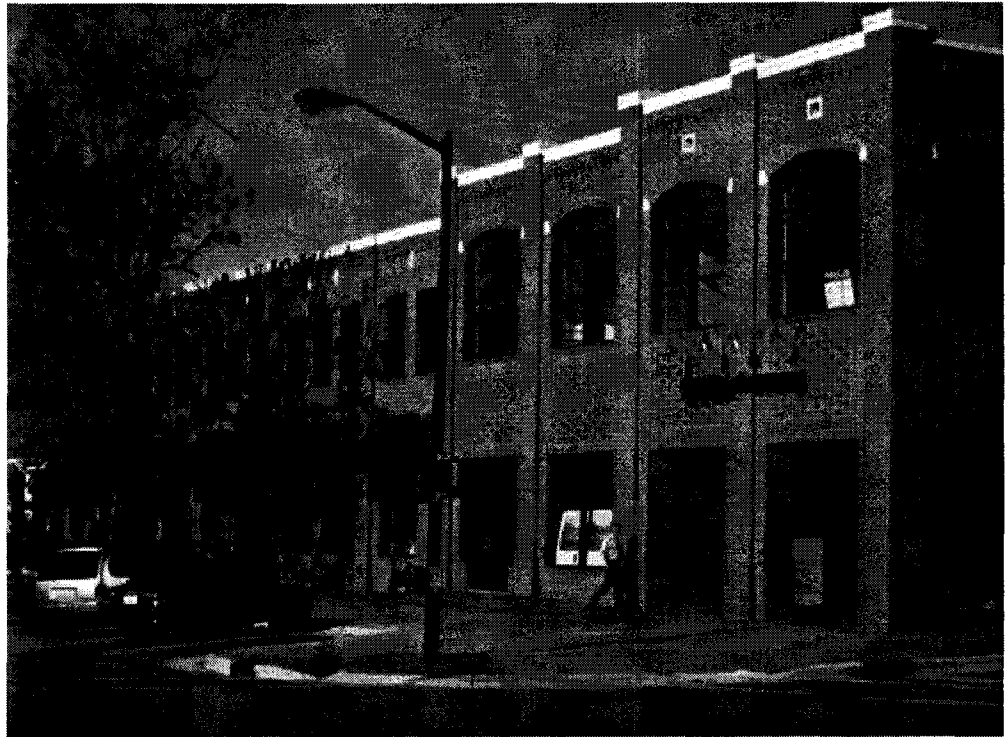
The McDonald's design we're all familiar with. Most would agree that Asheville, North Carolina, did better with its McDonald's, seen below.



Which one gets built depends heavily upon how much push back the company gets from local residents and officials about design and its importance.”

One community that has asked chain stores and franchises to fit-in is Davidson, North Carolina. Chain drugstores, like CVS, Rite Aid, and Walgreens are proliferating across the country. They like to build featureless, single-story buildings on downtown corners, usually surrounded by parking — often after one or more historic buildings have been demolished. This is what CVS proposed in Davidson.

The town could have easily accepted the cookie cutter design (Plan A), but instead it insisted on a two story brick building, pulled to the corner with parking in the rear. CVS protested, but at the end of the day they built what the town wanted because they recognized the economic value of being in a profitable location.



Davidson, North Carolina, did not settle for CVS' "Plan A" design.

The lesson learned is that successful communities have high expectations. They know that community identity is more important than corporate design policy.

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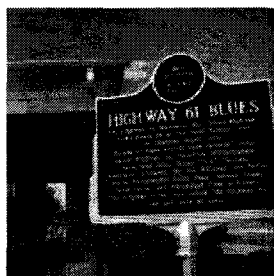
One Response to “The Secrets of Successful Communities – Part 4: Pick and Choose Among Development Projects”

Jesse Richardson

[July 13, 2013](#)

Mr. McMahon’s prescriptions are great for wealthy people. Not so much for low- to moderate-income families. Both communities cited by Mr. McMahon are very exclusionary. To Davidson’s credit, they are attempting to incorporate affordable housing into the town.

[Reply](#)



The Secrets of Successful Communities – Part 5: Cooperate With Neighbors for Mutual Benefit

July 15th, 2013

The Secrets of Successful Communities

1. Have a vision for the future
2. Inventory community assets and build on them
3. Use education and incentives, not just regulation
4. Pick and choose among development projects
5. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit
6. Pay attention to community aesthetics
7. Have strong leaders and committed citizens

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Cultural Asset Mapping,
by Rob Voigt

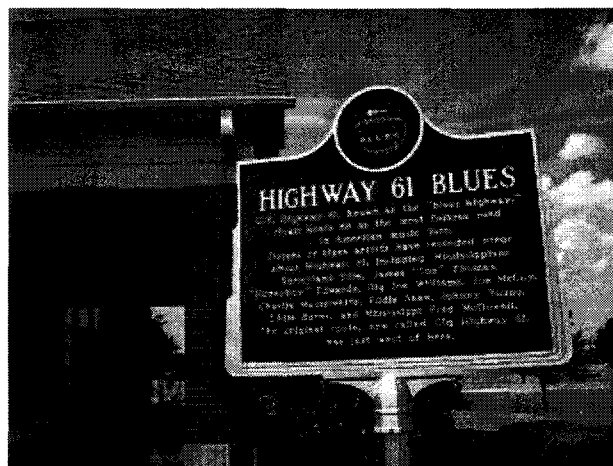
by Edward McMahon

Historically, elected officials have tended to view neighboring communities, the county government, and even the managers of adjacent national parks or other public lands as adversaries rather than allies. Some community leaders see economic development as a “zero-sum” game: if you win, I lose.

Successful communities know that today’s world requires cooperation for mutual benefit. They know that the real competition today is between regions. They also understand that very few small towns have the resources, by themselves, to attract tourists or to compete with larger communities.

Regional cooperation does not mean giving up your autonomy. It simply recognizes that problems like air pollution, water pollution, traffic congestion and loss of green space do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Regional problems require regional solutions.

There are numerous examples of communities working together for mutual benefit. In the Denver region, 41 communities cooperated to support funding for a regional transit system (i.e. FasTracks). Cleveland area communities cooperated to build a Metro parks system. Metro Minneapolis and St. Paul collaborate on tax base sharing.

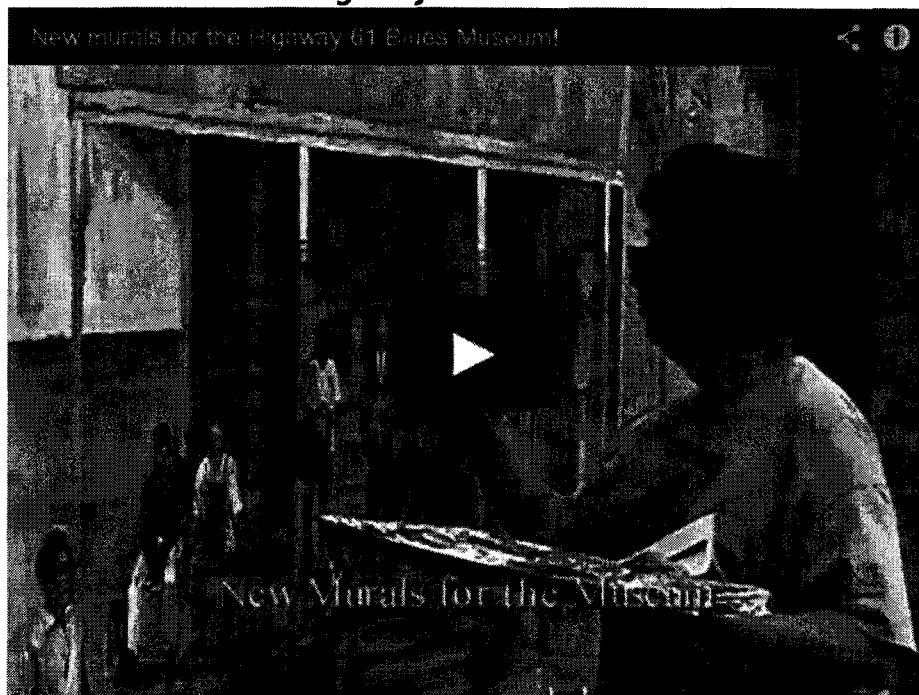


Even small rural communities can cooperate for mutual benefit. Small towns in Mississippi have worked together to organize and promote U.S. Route 61 as “the Blues Highway.”

Think Regionally. Act Locally, by Jim Segedy, FAICP, & Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy, AICP

R is for Regional Planning, by Laurence C. Gerckens, FAICP

Dutch Blues Lovers & Highway 61 Blues Museum Murals:



Similarly, five rural counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore collaborated with the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy to create a regional agreement to preserve farmland and open space.

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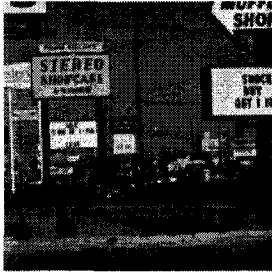
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Special Feature

The Secrets of Successful Communities – Part 6: Pay Attention to Community Aesthetics

July 16th, 2013

The Secrets of Successful Communities

1. Have a vision for the future
2. Inventory community assets and build on them
3. Use education and incentives, not just regulation
4. Pick and choose among development projects
5. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit
6. Pay attention to community aesthetics
7. Have strong leaders and committed citizens

by Edward McMahon

During the development boom of the 1980's, *Time Magazine* had a cover story article about what they called "America's growing slow-growth movement." The article began with a quote from a civic activist in Southern California, who said "we were in favor of progress, until we saw what it looked like." Looks count! Aesthetics matter!

Mark Twain put it this way, "We take stock of a city like we take stock of a man. The clothes or appearance are the externals by which we judge."

Over 80 percent of everything ever built in America has been built since about 1950 and a lot of what we have built is just plain ugly. There are still many beautiful places in America, but to get to these places we must often drive through mile after mile of billboards, strip malls, junk yards, used car lots, fry pits, and endless clutter that has been termed "the geography of nowhere."

Related articles:

Public Buildings Should Set the Standard, by Ed McMahon

Design Matters, by Ed McMahon

An Introduction to Urban Design, by Ilene Watson

D is for Design, by Laurence Gerckens, FAICP

Zoning for Aesthetics, by Christopher Duerksen, Esq.

Billboards: The Case for Control, by Ed McMahon



The problem is not development, per se; rather the problem is the patterns of development. Successful communities pay attention to where they put development, how it is arranged, and what it looks like.

The image of a community is fundamentally important to its economic well-being. Every single day in America people make decisions about where to live, where to invest, where to vacation and where to retire based on what communities look like. Consider tourism, for example. The more any community in America comes to look just like every other community the less reason there is to visit. On the other hand, the more a community does to protect and enhance its uniqueness whether natural or architectural, the more people will want to visit. Tourism is about visiting places that are different, unusual, and unique. If everyplace was just like everyplace else, there would be no reason to go anyplace.

Successful communities pay attention to aesthetics. Typically they control signs, they plant street trees, they protect scenic views and historic buildings, and they encourage new construction that fits in with the existing community.

Editor's note: Whether you're in a big city or small town, dignified, well-designed public buildings can also make a huge difference. They also set an example for developers showing that the community truly believes in a high quality built environment.



Two public buildings in the small city of Port Royal, South Carolina (population, 11,000) set the standard. Port Royal's city hall is above left; the fire station is above right (and, yes, even buildings like fire and police stations can and should be well-designed).

Take a look at Ed McMahon's earlier article, [Public Buildings Should Set the Standard](#), for more on the key role public buildings play.

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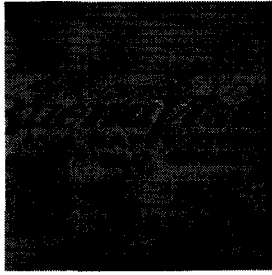
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Special Feature

The Secrets of Successful Communities – Part 7: Have Strong Leaders and Committed Citizens

July 17th, 2013

The Secrets of Successful Communities

1. Have a vision for the future
2. Inventory community assets and build on them
3. Use education and incentives, not just regulation
4. Pick and choose among development projects
5. Cooperate with neighbors for mutual benefit
6. Pay attention to community aesthetics
7. Have strong leaders and committed citizens

Related articles:

Making a Difference, by Otis White

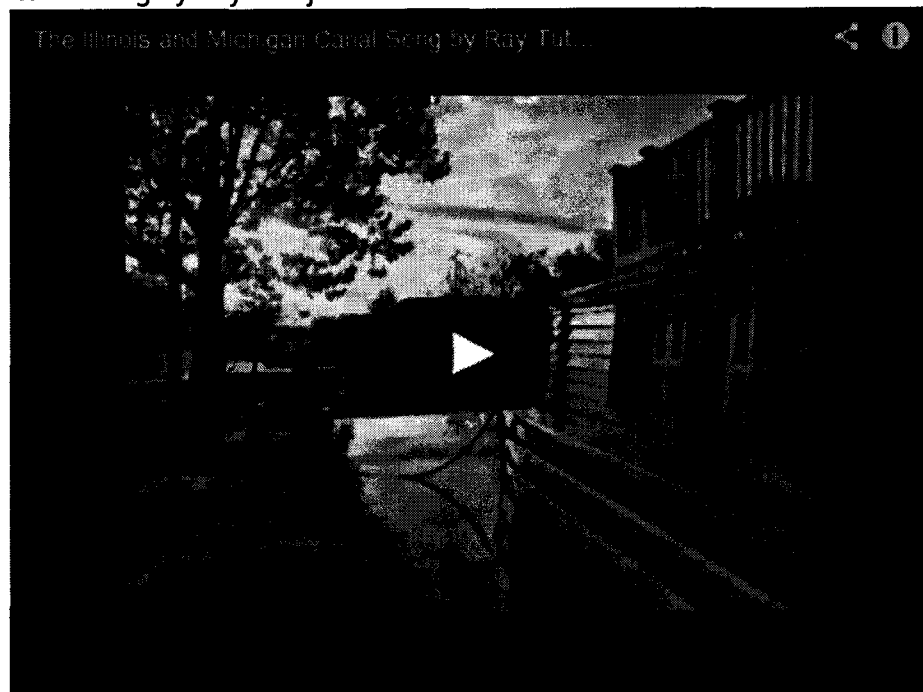
Winning a Community Over to New Ideas, by Otis White

by Edward McMahon

Successful communities have strong leaders and committed citizens. A small number of committed people can make a big difference in a community. Sometime these people are longtime residents upset with how unmanaged growth has changed what they love about their hometown. Others times, the leaders might be newcomers who want to make sure that their adopted hometown doesn't develop the same ugliness or congestion as the one they left. More often than not, they're simply citizens who care a great deal about their community.

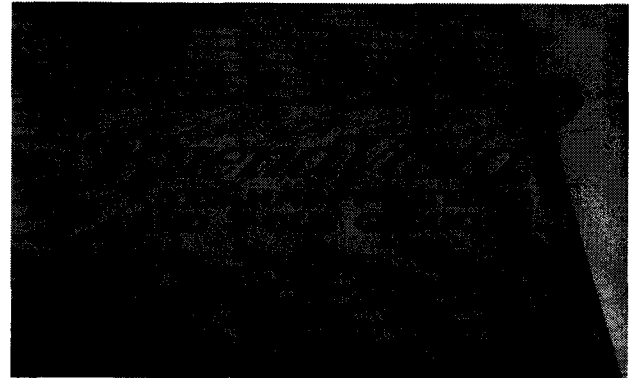
An example of a citizen who made a big difference is Jerry Adelman. Jerry grew up in the small town of Lockport, Illinois. Almost single-handily Jerry created the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor which helped restore an abandoned canal linking Lockport with Chicago. Adelman's success at building local support for the canal convinced Congress to add the canal corridor to the national park system.

Editor's Note: Take a Six Minute Break & Listen to The Illinois and Michigan Canal Song by Ray Tutaj Jr.



What about the Naysayers?

Every community has naysayers. Whatever the civic or community leaders propose to do, some people will always say things like: “you can’t do it,” “it won’t work,” “it costs too much,” “we tried that already.” And, “no,” is a very powerful word in a small community, but leaders of successful



communities know that “yes” is a more powerful word. Yes, we can make this town a better place to live in, to look at, to work in, to visit.

A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. An optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.

Summing Up:

We live in a rapidly changing world. In his new book, *The Great Reset*, author Richard Florida says that “the post-recession economy is reshaping the way we live, work, shop and move around.” He goes on to predict that “communities that embrace the future will prosper. Those that do not will decline.”

One big change is that people and businesses can now choose where to live or operate a business. In today’s world, **communities that cannot differentiate themselves will have no competitive advantage**. This means that quality of life is more important than ever.

Successful communities know that sameness is not a plus. It is minus. Successful communities set themselves apart. They know that communities that choose their future are always more successful than those that leave their future to chance.